'Clearly the best chess periodical in the world' Vladimir Kramnik

NEW IN CHESS

The First 25 Years

An Anthology

* 1984 – 2009 *

EDITED BY STEVE GIDDINS

New In Chess – The First 25 Years

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Edited by Steve Giddins

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Preface

It is probably just as well that I never married, as remembering anniversaries has never been my forte. Thus, it came as a complete surprise when I was approached by New In Chess in the early spring of this year, and asked whether I would like to edit a compilation of the best of the magazine, to mark its forthcoming 25th anniversary. My first reaction was one of shock, that the magazine I had been reading almost since its inception, had really been going that long. Another of the nowadays almost daily reminders of my advancing age, I thought.

My second reaction was one of delight, at receiving such a flattering offer. For, without any desire to appear to be pandering to my publisher's vanity, I am in no doubt that New In Chess has been, and remains, by far the finest chess magazine in the world, over the past quarter century. No other publication is read in so many countries, and by almost every serious chess player, from Garry Kasparov down to the average club player. And no other magazine has been able to boast regular contributions from every leading grandmaster over the period. The result has been a publication which has maintained outstanding quality throughout its entire period of existence, and continues to do so to this day.

It may be appropriate here to say a few words about the history of New In Chess. The story starts in 1968, when a group of young Dutch players decided to respond to their dissatisfaction with the Dutch chess federation and its official publication, by launching a magazine of their own. Led by Wim Andriessen, they started the Dutch-language magazine *Schaakbulletin.* It was a highly propitious time in Dutch chess, at which to launch such a magazine. Two particular associations came together to make the magazine what it was. In the first place, the inimitable Jan Hein Donner was then in his heyday, both as a player and a writer. Thanks to his involvement with *Schaakbulletin*, it quickly became characterised by the quality of its writing. The second big factor was the emergence around that time of Jan Timman, as The Netherland's finest chess prospect since Dr. Euwe. Timman had been influenced when young by the books of Botvinnik, and perhaps for that reason, has always been an inveterate analyst and annotator of games, both his own and other players'.

The combination of top-class prose and top-class analysis soon established *Schaakbulletin* as an exceptional magazine, but the Dutch language meant that it could not be widely read outside its own country. In 1984, however, the Dutch publisher Elsevier approached Wim Andriessen, with the idea of a range of chess products, including an English and a Dutch magazine, Yearbooks following the latest developments in opening theory, all this based on a brand-new database system (initially there were also plans for a New In Chess Quarterly, but this never saw the light of day). New In Chess started out as a monthly magazine, but as from 1986 the frequency was reduced to 8 issues a year, with some 90-100 pages in each. The Dutch edition was discontinued in 1986, although for two further years a special edition appeared for the Dutch market with a central section in Dutch. Ever since 1988 the magazine has been exclusively in English.

I should say a word about the basis for the selection. The intention was to produce a volume which would reflect the best of New In Chess over the past 25 years. Any such selection is inevitably going to be subjective, and reflect the likes, dislikes and prejudices of the editor. 'Beauty is in the eye of the looker', as a certain Russian chess book claimed a few years ago, having been translated into English by a non-native speaker! I would certainly not claim to possess any greater degree of objectivity than the next man, in such matters. However, every effort has been made to present a balanced selection of articles, covering not just the great tournaments and games played over the past 25 years, but also the best of the historical articles which have appeared in New In Chess, and also the interviews, writings about endgame studies and other aspects of chess. The only area perhaps consciously under-represented is opening theory, largely because such articles naturally date much more than anything else. I made the initial selection of articles, after re-reading every single issue of the magazine since 1984. This was then reviewed again, and gradually pared down to the final selection presented here. It was never going to be easy to decide what to leave out, but I hope that I have achieved a reasonable balance, and that every reader will find in this book at least some of the pieces he or she would have chosen, in my place.

One thing which is likely to strike any reader of this book is the large number of articles, particularly the interviews, and many of the tournament reports, which appear under the byline of Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam. Dirk Jan's involvement with New In Chess dates back to 1985, and for many years now, he has been co-Editor in Chief, with Jan Timman. Given his involvement on a day-to-day basis, he is undoubtedly the principal public face of New In Chess nowadays.

In reviewing the entire canon of New In Chess for the past 25 years, I was struck by the thought that chess lovers of my generation have been very fortunate to have lived through such an era. I took up chess in 1973 and thus missed Fischer's active career, but I have lived through virtually the whole of the careers of Karpov and Kasparov. I have also seen the entire chess careers of Anand and Kramnik, plus such entertaining superstars as Ivanchuk, Shirov and Morozevich. I have seen two Englishmen come within a single step of the world championship, the first time that has happened since Staunton's day, over 150 years ago. And I have also now witnessed the rise of Magnus Carlsen, who looks sure to etch his name alongside the other greats I have mentioned. Yes, my generation has been pretty lucky with the players we have seen. But we have been even luckier to have had that period documented with such outstanding quality.

In conclusion, I cannot do better than quote from what Hans Ree wrote, in New In Chess 1997/8. Reviewing Donner's classic work *The King* (a book, which was itself published by New In Chess, incidentally), he said: 'Whether or not an era will be seen as the Golden Age depends to a large extent on the way chess is written about, and in that sense the era portrayed by *The King* really was the Golden Age.' Substitute 'New In Chess' for 'The King', and I could not have put it better myself.

Steve Giddins
Rochester, England
December 2009

From its earliest days, New In Chess has always been able to present interviews with the greatest stars of chess. From the very first issue comes the following discussion with one of the game's true legends, Mikhail Botvinnik. As usual, 'The Patriarch' expresses some typically trenchant and outspoken views; if your name is Taimanov or Larsen, you may want to jump straight to the next article!

Botvinnik: 'They'll have to recognize Kasparov's talent sooner or later'

Alexander Münninghoff

'Hoho'. Botvinnik raises his arm restrainingly when I tell him that almost everybody thinks that the match in Vilnius against Smyslov will be a walk-over for Kasparov. 'Kasparov is, of course, better than Smyslov, if you look only at his Elo-rating. Much better in fact. But a chess player's Elo-rating is mainly based on tournament results and says very little about his strength as a match player. And that is a big difference, because psychology is very important in a match. Let me explain this properly. I know Smyslov like the back of my hand. We've played more than a hundred games together. Between '53 and '58 he was definitely the best player in the world. In fact, at that time, he hardly even suffered any defeats at all. He knew, better than anyone else, how to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the transition from middle to endgame; and once he had the advantage, he knew how to exploit it without fail. Smyslov has a very great understanding of the game and is exceptionally consistent: two qualities which make it possible for him to take part even now at this highest level of all. In fact, he can still do what he used to be able to do. That enormous experience in matches especially you cannot take away from him. Only, he is already over sixty and so I must say: in the end Kasparov will win this match, certainly if complex games appear on the board. But destroy... destroy Smyslov, that is impossible, you understand.

'I have already warned Garik against being too optimistic. I reminded him of the example of Lasker, who in 1935 – when he was 66 years old – Smyslov hasn't even reached that age – after a couple of inactive years took part, just like that, in the second international tournament in Moscow. There were twenty participants, but Lasker didn't lose a single game and finished half a point behind the winners in third place. So I say Kasparov-Smyslov will be a tough battle.'

– *I could imagine that for Kasparov, who lost his father at a very young age and had difficulty in getting over that, it would be especially hard to play against someone who could be his father. Am I way off the mark if I detect this element as quite clearly present in the match between Kasparov and Kortchnoi in London?*

'You must realize that Garik, ever since his early youth, has had only one dream: to play a match for the world title and to win that match. Any obstacle which gets in the way of realizing that dream has to be cleared out of the way. Of course Garik has great respect for Smyslov, but that won't prevent him from playing to the utmost. As regards the match in London, Garik got himself into trouble there at first. As far as I can judge, he didn't have enough 'doubts' before beginning the match. And every good chess-player needs to have 'doubts' at some point. He didn't underestimate Kortchnoi, but he was too sure that he would be able to handle him, in the end. And so, a difficult situation arose immediately when Kortchnoi won the first game, and then calmly proceeded to reduce the tension in the game, managed to avoid any complications, and in this way put Kasparov off his game.

'Kasparov has mainly himself to blame for the fact that Kortchnoi was able to win the first game at all. He began completely wrong. Lasker, who understood this sort of thing better than anyone else, already said so: you need to be at the location at least ten days before the start of a tournament or match; to get used to the food, the drinking-water, the climate, the time difference, the people, the surroundings. In short, you have to give yourself time to get acclimatized. Now, Kasparov arrived in London on the evening of the eighteenth, and on the twenty-first he was already sitting at the board. He should have known that he simply wasn't able to play at that time; had it turned out to be the organizer's fault (they should have offered him the opportunity of coming earlier to London) then Kasparov should at least have aimed at a draw in the first game. That would quite simply have been possible. But no, he was much too self-assured and began, straightaway in the first game, to play a complicated game. And so he lost. Look here, I have already told Garik about things like this. But that doesn't mean that he won't make similar mistakes next time. He's still young and certainly life will teach him the necessary lessons – but still, Garik is quite impulsive by nature. His big asset is that he has a huge reserve of energy and strength, which is sufficient to compensate for this. In London, he only needed to take the sixth game from Kortchnoi (and the fact that it came to this was entirely the result of Kortchnoi's temperament, as he didn't have the power to keep on playing calmly) in order to suddenly pull himself together again. And certainly when Kortchnoi made the big mistake of beginning the seventh game, straightaway without any time-out, Garik played to the utmost. I could just see that coming up; and after that Kortchnoi didn't have a chance. But, I repeat, you can't expect those sort of sudden changes in a match between Smyslov and Kasparov. Garik had to take account of that fact. Smyslov wouldn't have let him escape any more.'

– What is your present relationship with Kasparov? Does he still consult you at all?

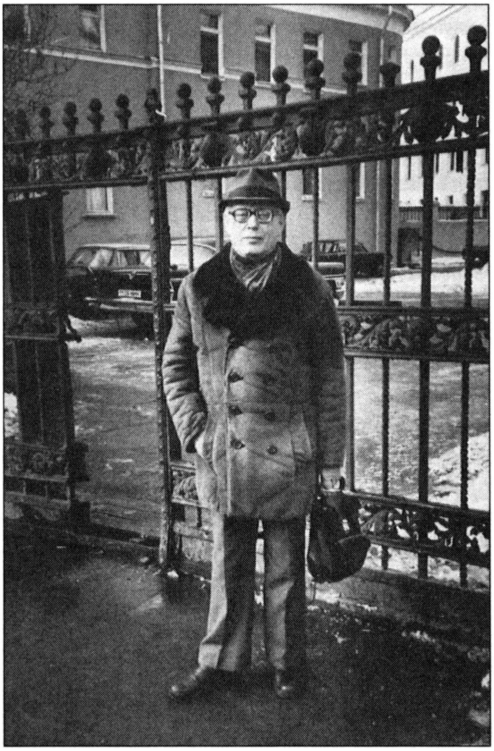
'We still get on very well together. Yes, what else do you expect; I have known him for ten years. And because he is one of the most outstanding young talents of all the pupils I've ever had, I still follow his achievements. Actually, his games are the only ones I still play over. Because just imagine he wants to ask my advice, I have to be sure that I wouldn't be completely at a loss. I don't take much notice of what the other grandmasters achieve, I must confess. I didn't even know that Kortchnoi was playing against Russian grandmasters again at the Hoogovens tournament. It's a pity, but I just don't seem to have the time and the energy anymore. But I still make an exception for Kasparov.'

– How did you discover his talent?

'As you know, I had my own chess-school. It mostly took place on a written basis with a meeting of all participants three times a year, usually in an attractive pioneers camp, in the South or in scientific centres like Dubna or Podolsk. The union financed some things – which is to say I got no salary – only travel costs and board and lodging. I did it for nothing really. But that wasn't so important to me.

'I usually had about fifteen to twenty pupils who came from the whole of the Soviet Union. Mostly, these pupils were recommended to me by trainers. What I did was, first of all look and see if any of the pupils had natural talent. You can see that almost immediately, if someone's got it or not. Yes, how... by the manner of playing, how someone comments on his own games, how he approaches the job of analysis. And with Garik I saw it from miles off, although he was at that time a small, thin and very excitable little boy. And this latter quality especially hindered him in his play. But, well, he was only ten years old.

'To cut the story short, we worked together for five years. And it was very intensive; that is simply my method of work. All my pupils got strictly individual treatment, for otherwise it just doesn't work. The procedure was that a pupil brought four of his own games to a communal training session, two with White and two with Black.



Mikhail Botvinnik, pictured on Gogolevsky Boulevard, location of the famous Moscow Central Chess Club.

There had to be a lost game included. Then he explained the games move by move. My job was to help with the analysis of the games; to point out mistakes; to give my opinion; and finally to give some general advice; in which area his game could be improved, and which were its imperfections. Besides this, I also let them play matches against each other, so that I could observe their behaviour in practice. I also commented on these games, after which I concluded the section with problems with special objectives, which were dealt with in writing afterwards.

'As far as Garik was concerned, I immediately came to blows with him. For he first made a move and only then thought about it. While the proper order is, as you know, exactly the other way around. 'Watch out,' I used to say to him, 'if you go on like this you'll become a Taimanov or a Larsen, Garik.' These two were the same, even when they were grandmasters – first move, then think.

'Now young Garik was very insulted by this, because he wanted to be an Alekhine. He's a big fan of Alekhine, I know. And his style resembles that as well. But, let me repeat: his giftedness was unique. He saw in an instant combinations which other pupils didn't see at all. And I have had a great many pupils. My school started for the first time at the end of the thirties, in Leningrad, in Alexander III's ante-room. My most talented pupil at that time was Taimanov. And also Stolyar, though he never became a good player in practice. He was Salov's trainer during the last junior tournament in Groningen.

'After that it wasn't until 1963 that I began a school again. I was working in Moscow then already. That group was very good: Karpov, Balashov, Razuvaev, Rashkovsky, all of them became at least a master. That school lasted for one year and a half.

'I began for the third time in 1969. In 1973, Kasparov joined me. I went on with this school until 1978. In the beginning this group had little success, but that changed after a while. Apart from Kasparov, I also got people like Yusupov, Psakhis, Dolmatov and Zaitsev under my wing. And among the girls Ioseliani and Akhmilovskaya. Kasparov was, without doubt, one of the most talented players during all those years.'

– *Imagine that Kasparov does indeed win from Smyslov. What will happen then?*

'The match between Karpov and Kasparov will be very different from the usual title contests. I think that from a creative standpoint, it will be the third top match of this century. The first was Alekhine-Capablanca in 1927. The second was between Tal and myself in 1960/61. And Karpov-Kasparov will be the third highpoint. Because, in this case, it won't be a question of who is a better player. This match will be creative because here we are dealing with two essentially different approaches to the game of chess. In my opinion you can divide great chess players into two sorts. First, the practical players. The most beautiful example is Capablanca. When he was young he didn't really think a lot about chess. He only did so when he was actually sitting at the board and playing a game. But then he showed his strength in practice and his legendary talent. Later, when he was older, his power declined but when he was young, he was an absolutely fantastic player.

'The second sort of player is the researcher.

He researches into the game in order to become better in practice. Well, when there is a case of more or less equal talent, then the theorist will have an advantage over the practical player. Because when the researcher takes his place at the board, he knows not only himself, but also his opponent inside out. And he will play in such a way that his own strong points, which he has come to know, will come to the fore and his weaknesses stay in the background.

'A good example of how that happens in practice is given by Alekhine in the preface to the 1927 New York tournament book which he wrote. He tells in this preface how he prepared himself for the match against Capablanca. Alekhine, yes, that was a good researcher. Capablanca wasn't at all. And this can also be said of Tal. The only reason that I, in my late fifties, could still compete with him, was that I was a researcher and he wasn't.

'Karpov is also a purely practical player. And Kasparov, although he is still young, is already a researcher. Although I agree with you if you say that you can hardly tell that about someone who is only twenty. Because a researcher needs, in the first place, to be capable of self-examination. He needs to know the limits of his capabilities; when he is putting too much strain on himself; how he should go about things in a tournament; be able to make a timetable which fits to the minute.

'Lasker was the first to do that and he was very good at it. In that respect, Kasparov is still far from perfect; but then on the other hand, he is working very hard at it. I mean on the purely technical side of chess, he has already achieved a mature mastery of the theory of the opening, the strategy of the middlegame and the analysis of adjourned games. But (as the match against Kortchnoi proves) he doesn't yet possess the ability to make his opponent play the sort of game that is most advantageous to himself.'

– *If I understand correctly, Mikhail Moiseevich the researcher tries to get to understand himself above all. Now I get the impression that Kasparov's personality is formed by his mother as far as anything is concerned that has not to do with chess. Does he get a proper chance to get to know himself?*

'As for Garik's mother, she has an unmistakeably good influence on her son. She forms a shield for him and protects him against unpleasant things. She takes care that he looks after himself and follows some rules of conduct and eats well. She supports him and she's his best friend. She's a very endearing woman; she works as a research assistant in an electrotechnical laboratory at the Azerbaijan Academy of Science. But she gave up this job last year in order to be able to devote herself entirely to her son's career. You mustn't forget that there are just the two of them. I believe that for the first time in the history of chess, we have a first class chess player who is actively helped by his mother.'

– *And Fischer? If I remember correctly, his mother even once chained herself to the railings of the White House, in order to raise money for her son.*

'Fischer?! Oh no... he was right from the start very independent. No, I really believe that the relationship between Garik and Klara is unique in the history of chess. With fathers it's different. My own father left us at about the time that I started playing chess. But I kept a good relationship with him. And with Smyslov it's well-known I believe, that he was helped for a long time by his father, who was a first-class chess player. I still remember that when Smyslov and I were playing in a tournament in Leningrad, and he had to decide whether to accept a draw or not, he asked his father what to do and he said: carry on playing. Well, yes, Garik's mother's influence obviously doesn't go that far.

'But to return to your previous question. By 'get to know yourself' I mean in this context 'get to know yourself as a chess player'. You know, Alexander Fedorovich, in all the time I've had anything to do with Garik, I've done my very best to teach him that. I've passed on to him all the knowledge I possess. I did that with all my pupils, but not all of them, by a long way, really grasped things. With Garik I was maybe even more emphatic in my directions, because from the beginning I believed in him. But it's no simple business to become a chess theoretician. You see, variations, yes, you can learn to calculate those. And in proportion to the amount of talent, that is at a certain level, not really such a difficult task. But research work – you could call that scientific work, especially before a match: then you study your own chess-playing as well as that of your opponent and his personality.

'I myself only began playing chess when I was twelve, and not until I was thirty did I finally completely master my method of scientific preparation. Between these two situations there were eighteen years. Now Kasparov began playing when he was 7, so we can't reasonably expect him to be a fully developed chess-theoretician before he's twenty-five. Which doesn't alter the fact that his power in practice is already so great that he is a fearsome opponent for anybody.'

– *What are the negative sides of Kasparov?*

'I would say: his temperament. Every top-class chess player has to know how to restrain himself, but he is bursting with energy and so he can't always manage this. He is not yet mature, although that is improving every year with every tournament. I told you already that as a young boy he was so impulsive that he ran headlong in the wrong direction, practically without thinking at all. A boy like Tolya Karpov didn't have that at all. Karpov matured early, as a chess player I mean. By that specific chess maturity I mean this: there are chess players who have a natural feeling for position. A chess player calculates the possible variations and within the scope of that calculation he knows what is likely to happen on the board. Now it's really important however to know what will happen after that. But you can't exactly predict that for sure; after all the length of a variation is limited.

> *'The match between Karpov and Kasparov will be very different from the usual title contests. From a creative standpoint, it will be the third top match of this century.'*

'That's a sign of maturity. Some chess players seem to have been given a feeling for position from the cradle onwards. Capablanca, for instance, and also the two men whom Garik now will have to deal with, assuming that he wins the following match: Smyslov and Karpov – especially Karpov. But there are also top-rate chess players without that innate feeling for position. Alekhine, for example, had to acquire it for himself, through study and in practice in fights. You already feel what I'm getting at, Alexander Fedorovich: Kasparov, an Alekhine follower doesn't have that innate feeling for position either.

'But he learns fast. Let's put it like this: I think that Garik, if he had had to play a match against Karpov before his meetings with Beliavsky and Kortchnoi and – for the time being assuming that he wins – Smyslov, that Garik would simply have lost. Indeed his understanding of position was still abundantly inadequate at that time. You can also see that in the three games which Kasparov and Karpov played against each other. Garik had the initial advantage in each game because he knows more about the opening. By the way: as far as that goes he's really magnificent; steadily he's built up his own theory already about the opening, with his own variations. But what you saw in those three games against Karpov, was that Garik didn't know how to hold on to his advantage, because Karpov understood the demands of the middlegame better. So that's what I mean by the two approaches to the game, which will confront each other in a possible match between Kasparov and Karpov. It will be highly interesting to experience this.'

– *One or two grandmasters have at some time remarked to me that you shouldn't let yourself be blinded by Kasparov. According to them he is just a passing phenomenon. Everything works for him at the moment and he manages to work everyone else off the board with his combinations, like Tal in his younger days. But in a couple of years he'll have lost his flair and well be left with a quite ordinary grandmaster.*

Botvinnik snorts in outright indignation before answering: 'That sort of thing is always being said. When I was young and began to outstrip my friends they said exactly the same about me. When there was a tournament in

Leningrad in 1934, at which Euwe and Kmoch also took part, I became ill in the second round. After a couple of days I was allowed to take part again and I finished first, although that was a big strain on me, of course.

'Then a tournament book came out, written by some pre-revolutionary. He said: how is it possible that Botvinnik still won the tournament? After all he was sick, no one expected that. The reason is that Botvinnik knows himself like an experienced workman knows his old and well-used workbench. They meant by this: the workbench is bad, but an experienced workman can manage with it. And they wrote that about a young man like me!

'But, well, that sort of thing passes. And with Kasparov it will pass too: they'll have to recognize his talent sooner or later. They've written me off lots of times and each time I came back. It will be like that with him too. Because you know, Alexander Fedorovich, a really great chess player doesn't just pop up every day. An ordinary sportsman, yes, he can set records in a comparatively short time and after that quickly disappear from the stage again. But with a chess player it's different. Or, to draw another comparison: pianists have to practise finger exercises every day. Lasker didn't play for a couple of years, but that didn't prevent him from coming third in a strong tournament in Moscow.

'In chess we are dealing with other things than the body alone. The development of the nervous system, let me summarize it by that phrase. It's a slowly developing process – the nervous system contains within itself an enormous amount of inert strength. Like I said before: with a bit of experience you can quite quickly say if someone has the characteristics of a great chess player – though whether or not he becomes one is a different matter. The chess player needs to be able to combine four qualities into a synthesis to reach the top: talent, good health, character and preparation.

'Very few chess players possess all these four qualities. Capablanca for example had a remarkable talent and good health, but no preparation at all, and his character was not all that it could have been either.

'Kasparov's health has improved during the last ten years – he's stronger and can control his nerves better. His talent is developing, in my opinion, in a very satisfactory way and, but I have already told you that, it can take about another five years before he is completely in his prime. I dare describe his preparation as really marvellous. Only his character is still a bit too hasty, too impulsive. But that will pass, look at his own example, Alekhine.'

– And Karpov?

'Karpov, that's something quite different. Really a completely different sort of person. Lots of talent, without any doubt. The character of a chess-fighter. No very impressive preparation, because he is just a great practical player. Poor health, which means that he can only survive long, intense confrontations with difficulty – look at his first two matches against Kortchnoi.'

– People say that there are now two camps in the USSR – one for Karpov (the conservatives) and one for Kasparov (who has to overthrow the establishment). These two trends are also said to exist among the Russian grandmasters.

'Alexander Fedorovich, what do you want me to say to that? I'm not so up-to-date any more on all the latest details. Yes, I know that Karpov has his friends, who are always allowed to go with him to tournaments. I don't approve of that. For principally that is very wrong. Every chess player should acquire the position he wants, himself, through his own achievements, not through nepotism.

'I follow only Garik's games now, but unless he asks me, I won't even go to Vilnius. I hardly talk to the grandmasters here anymore. Nor to the Chess Federation of the USSR. Listen: I suggested to the Chess Federation that a couple of grandmasters, who might like to profit from my training method and my experience, should be brought together. I had in mind about ten people. I would then instruct them in two or three sessions. And as far as I am concerned, I should like to invite foreigners too. For example, Mednis from America. But the Chess Federation doesn't seem to be interested; in any case they didn't reply.

'I think that these days we have come to an end. The Botvinnik school has proved its worth, but I, myself, don't possess the strength anymore to go on with it.'

When looking back at old magazines, it is always fascinating to see the first published games by young talents, who went on to become top players. The following effort by a youthful Jeroen Piket is one such, with its thoroughly Nimzowitschian 25th move marking out the white player as one to watch for the future.

Looking into the future

NOTES BY

Jeroen Piket

NI 10.1
Jeroen Piket
John van Baarle
Amsterdam open 1984 (9)

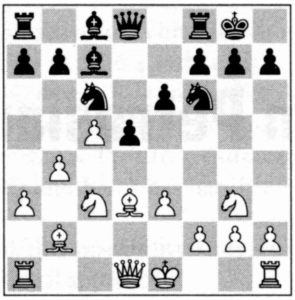
1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♘e2 d5 6.a3 ♗d6 7.♘g3

7.c5 is also possible, and after 7...♗e7 8.♘f4! b6 9.b4 a5 10.♗b2 followed by ♘d3 and f4 White has a good game.

7...c5

Well played, since White can continue with the advance e3-e4 after for example 7...c6.

8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.b4 ♗b6 10.c5 ♗c7 11.♗b2 ♘c6 12.♗d3

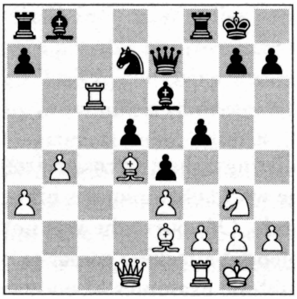


12...e5! A good move, although White still stands better due to the possibilities on the queenside. **13.0-0 e4?** After this very bad move Black is losing. Better was 13...♗e6. **14.♗e2 ♗e6 15.♘b5** White has the d4-square.

15...♗b8 16.♘d4 ♘d7 17.♖c1 ♘xd4 18.♗xd4 f5? The decisive mistake.

19.c6! bxc6 20.♖xc6 ♕e7

The 15-year-old Jeroen Piket, already a mature positional player.



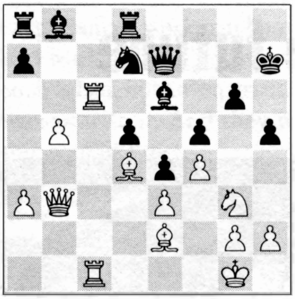
21.f4!!

A splendid move. If Black does not take, the dark-squared bishop becomes even stronger;

Black does not have the counterplay f5-f4 any more. If Black does take, he also loses: 21...exf3 22.♗xf3 ♗d6 (22...♔h8 is not good either, because of 23.♖xe6! ♕xe6 24.♗xd5) 23.♗c5!, and now there follows 23...♗xc5 24.♖xe6, while 23...♘xc5 fails to 24.bxc5, followed by 25.♖xe6.

21...g6 22.♕b3 ♖d8 23.♖fc1 h5 Obviously, Black doesn't know what to do anymore.

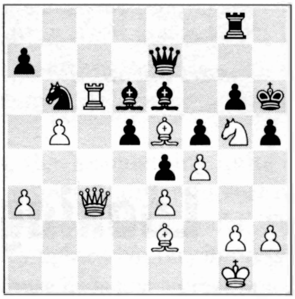
24.b5 ♔h7



25.♘h1! White decides the game by playing his knight to g5.

25...♘b6 26.♘f2 ♖d6 27.♘h3 ♔h6 Black is desperate. **28.♘g5 ♖xc6 29.♖xc6 ♗d6 30.♕c3** Threatens 31.♖xd6, and 30...♖d8 fails to 31.♗f6. If 30...♘c8 then 31.♗c5.

30...♖g8 31.♗e5



31...♖c8 In time-trouble Black played this move which will cost at least a piece. Somewhat better would have been 31...♗xe5, but after 32.♕xe5 ♕xa3 33.♖xc6 ♕xe3+ 34.♔f1 ♕c1+ 35.♔f2 ♕c5+ 36.♔g3 ♕e3+ 37.♗f3 ♕e1+ 38.♔h3 there isn't much to be done against 39.♖xg6+.

32.♗xd6 ♕xd6 33.♖xc8 d4 34.♕c7 ♕d7 35.♖h8+ Black resigned, because after 35...♔g7 follows 36.♕e5 mate.

Sadly, the year that New In Chess was born was also the year that the incomparable Tigran Petrosian passed away. Jan Timman paid tribute with a wonderful game annotation.

The inimitable Tigran Petrosian

Jan Timman

What distinguishes Petrosian from the rest of the world champions is his opaque, inimitable style. Of course, he was not afraid of playing splendid attacking games or of demonstrating sublime examples of endgame skill if the opportunity occurred. The most enduring impressions for me, however, are those games which so indubitably bear his stamp that they could not have been played by anyone else. One of these is the 18th game of the world championship match against Botvinnik.

When Botvinnik won the 14th game the score was 7-7, two won games for each. Immediately afterwards Petrosian took the lead again by winning the 15th game. The following two games ended in draws, bringing the score to 9-8 before the 18th game was played. Botvinnik had White and had to cautiously attempt to even the score.

He did play cautiously, even hesitantly. Instead of playing actively he aimed at a manoeuvring game. And in this type of game Petrosian was at his best. First defending warily, he gradually took over the initiative. Towards the 30th move he also hesitated and missed an opportunity for a promising offensive. Despite this he had a slight positional advantage at adjournment, which he converted into a win during the second session.

At the time this game was received with half-hearted enthusiasm – Euwe spoke in *Het Vrije Volk* of a 'rather dull showing' – and it is definitely not the most applauded game of the match. But the game has always intrigued me, especially the indefatigable manoeuvres of the black pair of knights.

QO 11.3
Mikhail Botvinnik
Tigran Petrosian
Moscow 1963 World Championship match, Game 18

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6

In this match Petrosian played the Queen's Gambit Accepted seven times! Since he got into serious difficulties in the 16th game, now he decided to use the Orthodox Defence.

3.♘c3 ♗e7

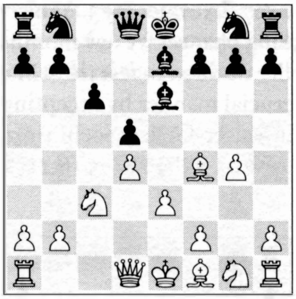
This order of moves was introduced by Alatortsev. Black postpones development of his kingside in order to make the Exchange Variation less attractive for White. Botvinnik prefers the variation 3...♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e3, followed by 7.♗d3 and 8.♕c2. Under the present circumstances this position cannot be reached, e.g. 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 c6 7.e3 ♗f5 and Black has hardly any opening problems.

In view of this possibility Botvinnik chose a very individual approach.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 c6 6.e3 ♗f5 7.g4

A sharp move that fits Botvinnik's style very well. In another opening with almost the same pawn formation, he successfully played the same advance against Smyslov in their second match game in 1954. 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 b6 5.♘e2 ♗a6 6.a3 ♗e7 7.♘f4 d5 8.cxd5 ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 exd5 10.g4!

7...♗e6

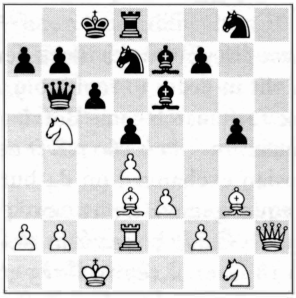


The best retreat square.

8.h3

A useful support move. Other possibilities are:

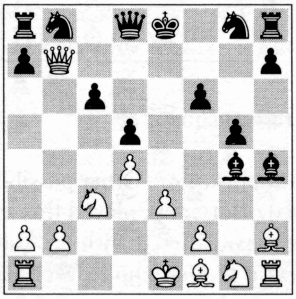
A) 8.♗d3 Botvinnik played this in the 12th game. Petrosian reacted with 8...♘d7 9.h3 h5 10.gxh5 ♘df6 11.h6 ♘xh6 12.♕c2 and now according to most commentaries, Black should have played 12...♕d7 followed by 13...♗f5. Instead of 9.h3, 9.♕f3 is a rather interesting alternative. In Miles-Georgadze, Bundesliga 1981/82 after 9...h5 10.h3 ♕b6 11.0-0-0 hxg4 12.hxg4 ♖xh1 13.♕xh1 g5 14.♗g3 ♗xg4 15.♖d2 ♗e6 16.♕h2 0-0-0 17.♘b5!



White obtained a strong attack for the sacrificed pawn. In *Chess Informant* Miles recommends 15...♘gf6 as a possible improvement for Black.

B) 8.h4!? This hyper-sharp advance was introduced by Botvinnik seven years later against Spassky, Oegstgeest 1970. After 8...♘d7 9.h5 ♕b6 10.♖b1 ♘gf6 11.f3 h6 12.♗d3 ♕a5 13.♘e2 b5 14.♘c1 ♕d8 15.♘b3 0-0 16.♘e2 a5. White could have kept up the pressure by 17.♖c1! (instead of 17.♘g3), according to the comments in the tournament book. In a recent game Knaak-Geller, Moscow 1982, Black deviated with 12...c5, but failed as well in reaching an equal game. After 13.♘ge2 ♖c8 14.♔f1 0-0 15.g5! hxg5 16.♗xg5 ♖fe8 17.♕e1 cxd4 18.exd4

♘h7 19.♗xe7 ♖xe7 20.♕g3. White has beautiful attacking chances. A few months after this game, Geller decided to test the white set-up in the most crucial manner by accepting the pawn sacrifice. In Vaiser-Geller, Sochi 1982, occurred 8...♗xh4 9.♕b3 g5! 10.♗e5 f6 11.♗h2 ♗xg4 12.♕xb7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

12...♕e7! 13.♕xa8 ♕xe3+ 14.♗e2 ♗xf2+ 15.♔f1 ♗h4 16.♕xb8+ ♔f7 17.♘d1 ♗xe2+ 18.♘xe2 ♕f3+ 19.♔g1 ♕xe2 20.♗g3 ♕g4 21.♔g2 ♕e4+ 22.♔h2 ♘e7 23.♕xh8 ♗xg3+ 24.♔g1! Draw. A fantastic game that is important for the evaluation of the entire variation.

8...♘f6

Under these circumstances Black develops his king's knight in order to reply to 9.♗d3 with 9...c5. The 14th match game Botvinnik-Petrosian continued 10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.♔f1 0-0 12.♔g2 and Petrosian exchanged on d4 but failed to reach an equal game after 12...cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.exd4 ♘d7 15.♕c2 ♘f6 16.f3 ♖c8 17.♗e5 ♗d6 18.♖ae1 ♗xe5 19.♖xe5 g6 20.♕f2. White has a slight but solid advantage. Five world championship matches later, in the 13th game Kortchnoi-Karpov, Merano 1981, Karpov deviated by playing 12...♖c8. After 13.♖c1 ♖e8 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♘b5 ♗f8 16.♘fd4 ♘xd4 17.♖xc8 ♕xc8 18.exd4 ♕d7 19.♘c7 ♖c8 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♖e1, White clearly had the advantage. According to Kortchnoi in *Chess Informant*, Black could have equalized with 13...a6. Indeed, White's game does not look very impressive, and it is striking that the results with this system are so positive for White at grandmaster level: five wins for White, a few draws and one loss: the game which I am now handling.

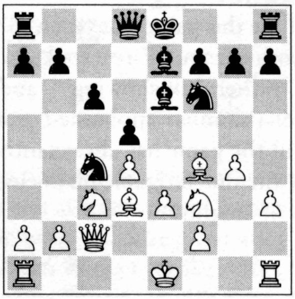
9.♘f3

A not unimportant refinement of White's game. On 9...c5 the strong move 10.♗b5+ can follow with favourable prospects for White.

9...♘bd7

Petrosian thought for almost a half hour before playing this move. He refrained from immediate action against White's centre, bringing his pieces into play instead.

10.♗d3 ♘b6 11.♕c2 ♘c4



A very characteristic Petrosian manoeuvre. The knight is on the way to d6 from where the important square e4 is controlled. Meanwhile, he wants to tempt his opponent to chase or take the knight.

12.♔f1

Flohr related in *Weltgeschichte des Schachs*, part 4, that he won a one ruble bet from Kotov at the time. Kotov thought that Botvinnik would play 12.♘g5. In the various commentaries this move was suggested in order to reply to 12...♗d7 with 13.e4. O'Kelly now recommends 13...h6 14.♘f3 ♗e6 in *Europe Echecs* ,with chances that are difficult to judge. I think White stands better after 15.e5 ♘d7 16.♗g3 followed by the manoeuvre ♘c3-e2-f4. Instead of 14...♗e6, 14...dxe4 looks more logical. After 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xc4 ♘d6 17.♗b3 0-0, Black has a good position.

Another recommendation instead of the text move is 12.♗xc4 dxc4 13.e4, with the intention of castling long. Black has nothing to fear here either. On the contrary, Black obtains the initiative by 13...b5.

12...♘d6

Temporarily the ideal square for the knight.

13.♘d2

This move is a bit too reserved for my taste. Again 13.♘g5 was possible in order to reply to 13...♗d7 with 14.♘xh7. After 14...♘xh7

15.♗xh7 g6 16.♗xg6 White remains a pawn ahead. Therefore, the complete retreat 13...♗c8 is mandatory and without any objections.

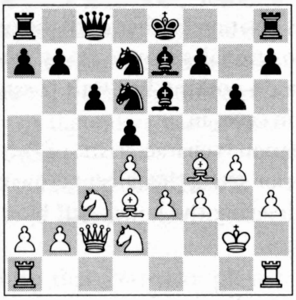
I think 13.♘e5! is the move most in conformity with the demands of the position. The knight is centrally well posted, and White has chances to use his small space advantage for an offensive.

13...♕c8

An obscure move. Black does have the threat 14...h5, but it is neutralized by White's following move, after which the question remains whether the queen move was of any use. In a certain way this kind of move is characteristic for Petrosian. He has limited space for manoeuvre, and with the text move he announces that it is sufficient for him.

14.♔g2 ♘d7 The knight manoeuvres continue.

15.f3 g6



16.♖ac1

This move is rejected by most commentators. They think that the time was ripe for 16.e4. Only Clarke in his book on Petrosian and Kmoch in *Chess Review* consider this advance in the centre. Kmoch thinks that the white centre becomes unstable after 16.e4 dxe4 17.fxe4 ♘b6 and that Black can steer towards castling long before beginning a counterattack.

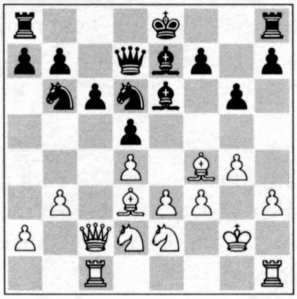
I think Black should drop all plans to castle queenside and simply castle kingside, because there is no question of a white attack that various commentators keep mentioning. For example, after 16...0-0 there is a very sharp fight in progress. It is difficult to say if the white centre is weak or strong.

16...♘b6 17.b3

Again 17.e4 should be considered, but now it is definitely not as strong as on the previous move.

17...♕d7 18.♘e2

In *Sahovski Glasnik* Rabar wrongly rejects this move. Botvinnik's strategic plan to bring the queen knight to f4 is in complete agreement with the demands of the position.



18...♘dc8!

'The players do not seem to notice each other very much; it is as if they have forgotten that they have opponents', remarked Golombek in *British Chess Magazine*. But this does not dim the excellence of the reaction. Black regroups his pieces in order to neutralize an eventual White offensive on the kingside.

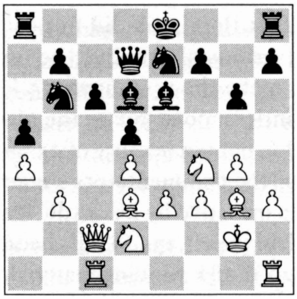
19.a4?

This sudden impatient move has not been rejected by anyone, but to me it seems precisely the source of White's future difficulties. Blocking the queenside is favourable for Black because White cannot begin a minority attack on the queenside anymore, while the advance e3-e4 is objectionable in view of the vulnerability of the b-pawn.

19...a5

A colourful moment in the game now that both players have recognized the existence of the other', wrote Golombek.

20.♗g3 ♗d6 21.♘f4 ♘e7



Someone who did not know the previous moves would never suspect that the knight on e7 is the queen's knight and the one on b6 the king's knight.

22.♘f1

White also keeps manoeuvring with his knight, after having convinced himself that the central advance 22.e4 was dubious. As Clarke comments, Black can afford the bold reaction 22...♗xf4! 23.♗xf4 dxe4 24.♘xe4 ♕xd4, since 25.♘d6+ can be met by 25...♔d7.

22...h5

Excellent timing. White has failed to retain the initiative after his energetic seventh move, and therefore Petrosian considers that the moment has arrived to completely neutralize White's small advantage in space.

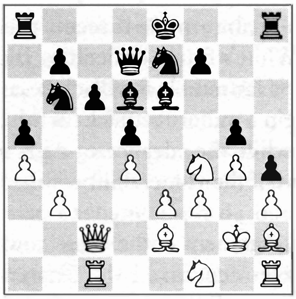
23.♗e2 h4

The consequence of the previous move.

24.♗h2

In *The World Chess Championship* ,Wade recommends 24.♗e1. Perhaps Botvinnik feared 24...♗xf4 25.exf4 ♕c7 26.♗d2 ♘d7 with the positional threat 27...♘f8, followed by 28...♗d7 and 29...♘e6. Despite his slight weakness on the black squares, Black has the better prospects.

24...g5



Further conquest of territory.

25.♘d3

I assume that Botvinnik did not consider 25.♘h5 as a serious alternative; he only took a minute to make the text move. 25.♘h5 is indeed a pointless move due to the plausible reply 25...♖h6, but not because of 25...♘g8 as the majority of the commentators suggest. White obtains the initiative by 26.♗xd6 ♕xd6 27.f4. The problem is that 27...f6 fails because of 28.fxg5 fxg5 29.♕g6+ winning material.

25...♕c7

Petrosian continues his subtle play. Less good is 25...♗xh2 26.♘xh2 ♕c7 because White takes the initiative by 27.f4! followed by 28.♘f3.

26.♕d2

White still does not have any possibility of taking over the initiative, since 26.♗e5 would be met by the strong reply 26...♗xe5 27.dxe5 d4! 28.exd4 0-0-0 and Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn. The flexibility of the black position is well demonstrated in this variation; at any moment he can castle to either side.

26...♘d7 27.♗g1 This bizarre retreat is justifiably criticized; Botvinnik will get back into stride with his following move.

27...♘g6

A good move, but immediately 27...f5 is also strong, as Szabo and Tal suggest.

28.♗h2 ♘e7

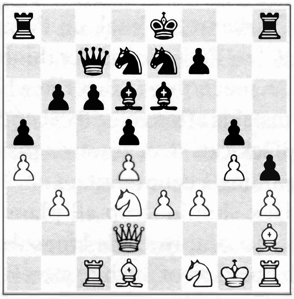
Petrosian resigns himself to repeating a move and again misses the chance to start a dangerous offensive on the kingside by 28...f5! E.g. after 29.♗xd6 ♕xd6 30.♕c3 0-0!, Black can reinforce his position further until the time is ripe for the positional advance f5-f4. Meanwhile White can do nothing but wait passively until his position caves in.

This hesitation is characteristic of Petrosian; after a superior set-up he fails to crown the work by not delivering the knock-out blow in many of his games.

29.♗d1

Botvinnik finally decides to aim at e3-e4 anyhow. There is no other plan in the position.

29...b6 30.♔g1



30...f6

Gives the g-pawn a little support. There is still 30...f5, though less strong. White can organize his defence lines by 31.♗xd6 ♕xd6 32.♕h2, keeping the positional disadvantage within limits.

31.e4

Finally. Although the white centre has little offensive strength, the advance does discourage Black's break actions c6-c5 and f6-f5.

31...♗xh2+ 32.♕xh2

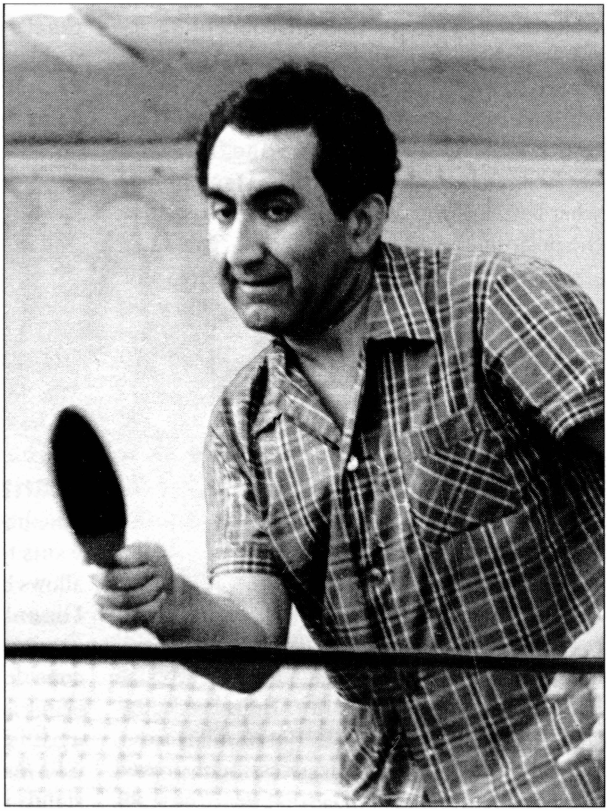
Botvinnik hardly hesitated to offer an exchange of queens, because his king has more danger to duck than Black. But the text move is condemned by almost all commentators, Clarke being the favourable exception. 'Incredible', Flohr called it and continued: 'After White finally 'risked' winning the game in the attack with e4, he exchanges queens on his next move'. End of quote. Very strange; also in other commentaries 'White's attacking chances' are continuously mentioned, although at no time during the game could White claim to have an attack. It seems that at the time – it was more than twenty years ago – the significance of a pawn duo on d4 and e4 was grossly overestimated.

32...♕xh2+ 33.♖xh2 ♖d8 34.♔f2

Stronger is 34.♖d2 and then 35.♔f2.

34...♔f7

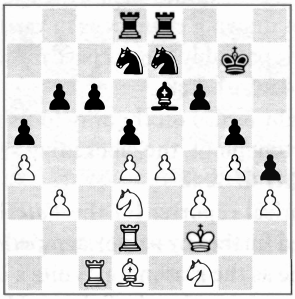
Flohr thinks that Petrosian played inaccurately here and that he could have saved a tempo by castling. A rather comical mistake; by castling on the 34th move Petrosian would have undoubtedly done Tim Krabbé, the curiosity hunter, a favour. But Petrosian had not previously reached the position which occurred two moves later.



'Iron' Tigran Petrosian – ever adept at batting away any danger.

35.♔e3 ♖he8 36.♖d2 ♔g7 37.♔f2

See the comment on White's 34th move. The white king was not safe on e3.



37...dxe4

Before playing the knight to f8, Black relieves the tension in the centre. After 37...♘f8 White could have continued with 38.e5.

38.fxe4 ♘f8 39.♘e1

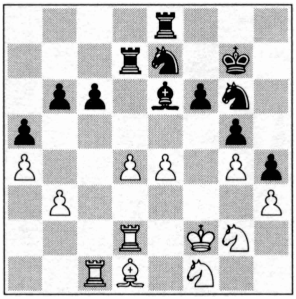
A good defensive move. The knight is on the way to g2 in order to keep the black knight off the sensitive square f4.

39...♘fg6

Petrosian only had two minutes for his last two moves, and that explains why he missed the strongest continuation here. More precise would have been 39...♗f7! in order to post the bishop on g6 and the knight on e6, thus exerting optimal pressure on the white hanging pawns.

40.♘g2 ♖d7

The game was adjourned here. Black has a small, but solid positional advantage, because the white pawns on b3 and h3 are permanently weak. It is remarkable that a number of top grandmasters thought differently at the time. Bronstein, Tal, Flohr and even Botvinnik apparently thought that White stood somewhat better. Perhaps this misconception has the same background that I touched on in the comment on White's 32nd move: the overestimation of the strength of a pawn centre at the time. I assume that Bronstein and Tal would not hesitate to admit that Black stands somewhat better, if they were asked now to evaluate the position.



Petrosian and his second Boleslavsky were already of that opinion at the time. They considered Black's advantage so small that Petrosian had planned to offer a draw. Boleslavsky restrained him and confided: 'Botvinnik is tired. Play on; you can win'. His assessment proved to be correct.

41.♗c2

The sealed move, which took Botvinnik a good fifteen minutes. Here and there 41.♘h2 is tagged as less good. After 41...♖ed8 42.♘f3 ♘e5! 43.♘ge1 ♘xf3 44.♘xf3 c5 45.d5 ♘g6 46.♗e2 ♗f7 followed by 47...♘f4 and 48...♗g6 Black has a tremendous position.

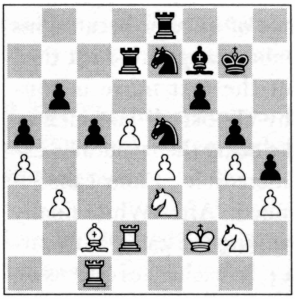
41...♗f7 42.♘fe3?

After the game Botvinnik declared that this was a slip of the finger and that he should have played 42.♖cd1. It is difficult for me to accept this explanation for a wrong move, hook, line and sinker, because it would indicate an amazing lack of concentration and discipline. I can hardly avoid the impression that Botvinnik would rather admit anything except a weak adjournment analysis.

However, it must be remembered that Botvinnik, in contrast to Petrosian, did not have a second. Instead of the text move, 42.♖cd1 is indicated in order to continue with 43.♘fe3 after 42...♖ed8. The difference from the game is that after 43...c5 44.d5 ♘e5 45.♘c4 ♘xc4 46.bxc4 ♘g6 47.♗d3 ♘e5 48.♗f1 ♗g6 49.♖e1 White can defend the e-pawn effectively, since there is no black rook on the e-file.

42...c5! Under these circumstances very strong.

43.d5 ♘e5



44.♖f1?

The beginning of an unfortunate plan. White wants to put pressure on f6, but in doing so he allows his opponent to set his pieces up better. His only chance was 44.♘c4 ♘xc4. After 44...♘xc4 45.bxc4 the following moves may be considered:

A) 45...♗g6 46.♘e3 ♘c8, and now not 47.♘f5+? as Kan suggested in *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, because after 47...♗xf5 48.exf5 White stands just as hopelessly as after the game continuation. In contrast, with the pawn sacrifice 47.e5! White keeps good drawing chances. On 47...♖xe5 follows 48.♗f5! and Black must allow a knight on f5 or permit an exchange of his strong knight for the bad white bishop.

B) 45...♘c8. All commentators recommend the pawn sacrifice 46.e5 here also. After 46...♖xe5 47.♗f5 ♖d8 48.♗xc8 ♖xc8 49.♖b1 White suddenly has splendid counterchances. He has exchanged his bad bishop for the superior knight, and the black b-pawn is weak and cannot be defended. Stronger is 47...♗e6, whereupon White continues with 47.♘e3, obtaining the sort of drawing chances as in variation A.

The text is probably the decisive mistake.

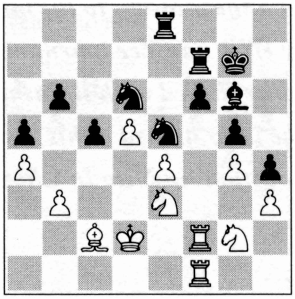
44...♗g6 45.♔e1 ♘c8

This knight is also on the way to its most ideal supporting point, the blockading square d6.

46.♖df2 ♖f7 47.♔d2

The sceptical reporter for the *Volkskrant* (not mentioned further by name) stamped this move at the time as the reason for White's defeat and was of the opinion that the fight could have been carried on with 47.♖e2. After 47...♘d6 48.♘d1 b5! White has as little to hope for as before. As in the game, he would be completely lost.

47...♘d6



Black has a dream position.

48.♘f5+

Bitter necessity if White wants to avoid losing a pawn.

48...♗xf5 49.exf5

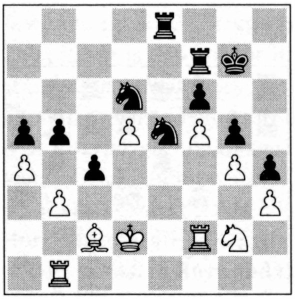
Here, Bronstein proposed the exchange sacrifice 49.♖xf5 ♘xf5 50.♖xf5 as the only chance to maintain some sort of line of defence. In desperate situations perhaps desperate sacrifices are recommendable, but here I think the technical difficulties of Black are at a minimum after 50...♖fe7, followed by 51...♘f7 and 52...♘d6.

49...c4

After thinking for about 10 minutes, Petrosian decided that the time was ripe for an offensive on the queenside.

50.♖b1 b5!

Once Petrosian has taken the initiative, he drives on. The positional threat is 51...b4. A protected passed pawn automatically means a win for Black.



51.b4 White's only chance. But now a new blow follows.

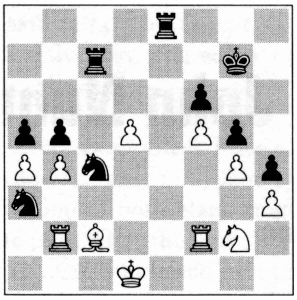
51...c3+!

With this pawn sacrifice Black not only opens the c-file but frees the square c4 for one of the knights.

52.♔xc3 ♖c7+ 53.♔d2 ♘ec4+ 54.♔d1 ♘a3 55.♖b2 After 55.♖b3 ♘xc2 56.♖xc2 ♖xc2 57.♔xc2 ♖e2+ White loses a piece.

55...♘dc4

The pair of black knights is truly devastating in the white camp!

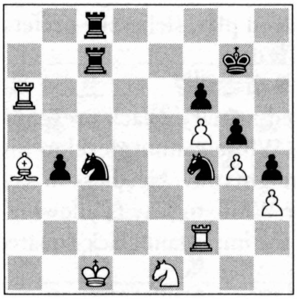


56.♖a2 axb4 57.axb5 ♘xb5 58.♖a6 ♘c3+ 59.♔c1 ♘xd5

Now Black is a pawn up without his position losing anything in superiority.

60.♗a4 ♖ec8 Petrosian retains the discovered check in the position.

61.♘e1 ♘f4



White resigned.

The final position shows the black knights in supreme positions, symbolic of the entire course of the game. The win occurred by means of 24 knight moves. In addition, Botvinnik's resistance seemed to have been broken; Petrosian was ahead with a score of 10-8, and after having won the 19th game, a series of 3 draws was sufficient to secure the world title.

The New In Chess years coincided with most of the chess career of John Nunn, player, writer, problem-solver, computer programmer, publisher, and all-round boffin. During his best years, from the mid-80s to the mid-90s, he was a top 10 player, and won the mighty Wijk aan Zee tournament no fewer than three times, twice outright and once shared with Balashov. In the 1985 event, he also won the game that he later named as his best-ever, and naturally, it appeared with his annotations in New In Chess.

John Nunn's best game ever

NOTES BY

John Nunn

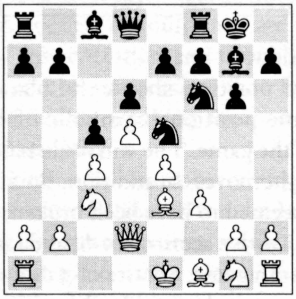
KI 48.5
Alexander Beliavsky
John Nunn
Wijk aan Zee 1985 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 ♘bd7

6...♘bd7 is an unusual variation, which I successfully employed against Gheorghiu. That game had continued 7.♘h3 e5 8.d5 ♘h5 with double-edged play. Beliavsky prefers the more natural 7.♕d2.

7.♕d2 c5 8.d5 ♘e5!?

A prepared novelty. Black prevents ♘h3 and ♘ge2, so White cannot develop his kingside pieces straightaway. Needless to say, it would be bad for White to play f4 allowing ♘eg4 exchanging the important black-squared bishop.



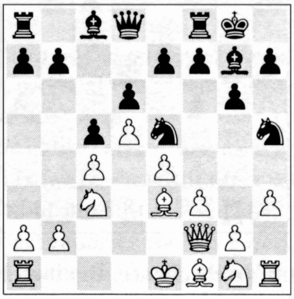
9.h3?!

This is the obvious attempt to refute ♘e5; White prevents ♘eg4 and thereby threatens 10.f4. In fact more subtle methods give White a good game since in a later round Timman improved by 9.♗g5! and after 9...a6 10.f4 ♘ed7 (10...♘eg4 is pointless now that the bishop has sidestepped the attack) 11.♘f3 b5 12.cxb5 axb5 13.♗xb5 ♕a5 14.0-0 ♘xe4 15.♘xe4 ♕xb5 16.♗xe7 ♕xb2 17.♕xb2 ♗xb2 18.♖ae1 ♗a6 19.♖f2 ♖fe8 20.♘xd6 ♖eb8 21.♘e4 ♗c4 22.♗d6 ♖b7 Black was in big trouble. 23.♗e5! would have been very strong, but Timman played 23.♘e5? and after 23...♗xe5 24.fxe5 ♗xd5 25.♘xc5 the players agreed to a draw.

9...♘h5 Black must continue to play actively or he will be thrown back with severe loss of time.

10.♗f2

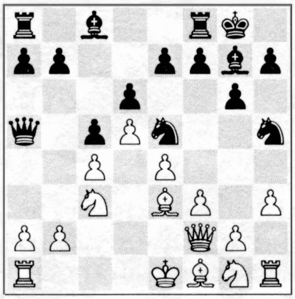
Since 10.♔f2? e6 is unwise on account of the coming 11...♕h4 (if 11.♗g5 then 11...♗f6), the main alternative is 10.♕f2, with the following variations:



A) 10...f5 11.exf5 ♗xf5 (11...♖xf5 12.g4 ♘f4 13.♕d2! wins) 12.g4 ♗xg4 13.hxg4 ♘xg4

14.♕d2 (14.♕e2? ♘g3) 14...♘g3 15.♖h3! (15.♖h4? ♘f5) 15...♘xf1 16.♔xf1 and Black doesn't have enough compensation for the sacrificed piece;

B) 10...♕a5 and now:



B1) 11.g4 ♘xf3+ (11...♘xc4? 12.♗xc4 ♗xc3+ 13.♔d1! is good for White) 12.♘xf3 (12.♕xf3? ♗xc3+ and 13...♗xb2) 12...♗xc3+ 13.♔d1 (13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♔e2 ♕xc4+ 15.♔d1 ♕a4+ and the most likely result is perpetual check since if White interposes his queen Black can play 16...♘g3 picking up a fourth pawn for the piece) 13...♘g3 (13...♘f6 14.bxc3 ♘xe4 is less good since Black no longer has his black-squared bishop) 14.♕xg3 ♗xb2 15.♖b1 (15.♖c1!? is interesting since if Black takes the rook he may come under a strong kingside attack) 15...♕a4+ 16.♔e1 (the king cannot move to the second rank, because of 16...♕xa2) 16...♕c2 17.♖d1 (17.♘d2 ♗c3) 17...♗c3+ and Black wins the e4 pawn to give an unclear position;

B2) 11.♗d2 ♕b4! 12.♘d1 (12.g4 ♕xb2 13.♖b1 ♕c2 14.gxh5 ♘xc4 and Black stands well after 15.♖c1 ♕xd2+ 16.♕xd2 ♘xd2 17.♔xd2 ♗h6+ or 15.♗xc4 ♗xc3) 12...♘f4! 13.♕g3 (13.♕e3 ♘ed3+ 14.♗xd3 ♘xg2+ 15.♔e2 ♘xe3 16.♗xb4 ♘xd1 is also fine for Black) 13...♘ed3+ and the c4 pawn is lost;

B3) 11.♖c1! f5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.g4 ♗e4 (this is the point of interposing the moves ♕a5 and ♖c1, but even so Black cannot equalise) 14.gxh5 ♘xf3+ (14...♗xf3 15.♘xf3 ♘xf3+ 16.♔d1 is also good for White) 15.♘xf3 ♖xf3 16.♕d2 ♖xe3+ 17.♕xe3 ♗xh1 18.hxg6 and now Black cannot recapture because 18...hxg6 19.♕e6+ and 20.♗d3 gives White a crushing attack. Thus Black cannot prevent White capturing at h7 when the bad position of the bishop at h1 ensures a White advantage;

C) 10...e6! This move represents the best answer to 10.♕f2. White is unable to drive the knights back, for example 11.f4 ♗f6! or 11.g4 exd5! 12.cxd5 (12.gxh5 d4 and 12.♘xd5 ♘f6 are good for Black) 12...♗f6 13.h4 ♗xg4 (the point of interposing the exchange at d5) 14.fxg4 ♘xg4 and Black gains three pawns and a lot of black squares for the piece. Of course White doesn't have to try repulsing the knights at once, but he lacks natural developing moves while they remain at their active posts.

10...f5 11.exf5 11.f4 ♗h6 12.g3 fxe4 13.♘xe4 gives Black active play after either 13...♗f5 or 13...b5!? 14.cxb5 c4.

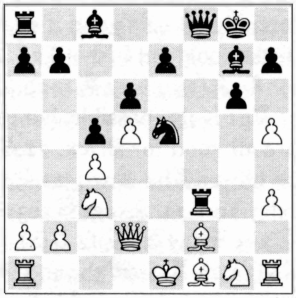
11...♖xf5

After 11...♗xf5 12.g4 Black loses a piece for nothing, while 11...gxf5 12.f4 ♗h6 13.g3 leads to the expulsion of both black knights and a clear White plus. After the move played Black threatens 12...♘xf4 followed by 13...♗h6, so White is committed to the critical move.

12.g4 ♖xf3 13.gxh5 If 13.0-0-0 ♖f7! 14.gxh5 ♕f8, Black regains his piece with advantage, for example 15.♘e4 ♗h6 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.♕xe3 ♖xf1.

13...♕f8

Up to this point the game had followed some opening analysis I carried out about six months ago, but unfortunately I had overlooked White's next move.



14.♘e4!

Other moves give Black more chances, for example:

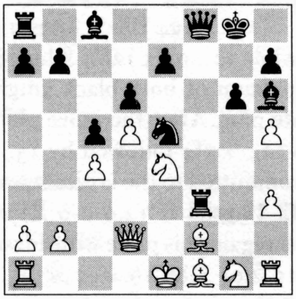
A) 14.♕e2 ♘d3+ 15.♕xd3 ♖xd3 16.♗xd3 ♗f5 17.♖d1 (17.♗e2 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♗e4 19.♖h2 ♕f4 traps the rook) 17...♗xd3 18.♖xd3 ♕f5 19.♖f3 (White must prevent 19...♗xc3+ and 20...♕e4) 19...♗xc3+ 20.bxc3 ♕b1+ 21.♔e2 ♕xa2+ 22.♔d3 (or else White loses the c4 and d5 pawns) 22...♕b1+ 23.♔e2 a5 and Black has excellent winning chances;

B) 14.♖d1 ♗f5 and White is devoid of constructive moves. 15.♕e2 is met by 15...♗d3, while otherwise 15...♗h6 is a threat;

C) 14.♖h2 ♗h6 15.♕d1 ♕f4 16.♖g2 ♗f5 and Black has a much stronger attack than in the game, e.g. 17.♘ge2 ♖e3! 18.♗xe3 ♘f3+ 19.♔f2 ♕xe3+ or just 18...♕xe3;

D) 14.hxg6 ♗f5 (14...hxg6 is a mistake since in many lines the white queen comes to bear on g6) and White has even fewer decent moves, e.g. 15.♗e2 ♖xf2 16.♔xf2 ♗e4+ or 15.♗e3 ♖xf1+.

14...♗h6



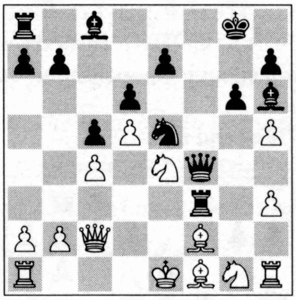
Better than 14...♗f5 15.♘g5 ♗h6 16.h4 or 14...♖f4 15.♕e2 (not 15.♘g5 h6, however) 15...♗f5 16.♗g2.

15.♕c2?

Now Black has the advantage. The best line was 15.♕e2 ♘d3+ 16.♕xd3 ♖xd3 17.♗xd3 ♕f4 (threatening 18...♗f5 and if 18.♘e2 then 18...♕f3 forks rook and bishop) 18.♖d1! (the only move) 18...♗f5 19.♘e2 ♕f3 20.♘2g3 ♗e3 21.♖f1! (21.♖g1 is also possible, but the following lines are all good for Black: 21.♘xf5 gxf5 22.♖g1+ ♔h8; 21.♖h2 ♗xe4 22.♘xe4 ♗f4!; 21.0-0 ♗xh3 and 21.♗xe3 ♕xe3+ 22.♔f1 ♗xe4 23.♘xe4 ♕f3+ 24.♘f2 ♖f8) 21...♗xe4 22.♘xe4 ♗xf2+ 23.♖xf2 ♕xh5 and I would assess this position as being roughly level.

15...♕f4!

This move forces White to react quickly, since 16...♗f5 is a powerful threat. In the subsequent variations there are many lines in which Black emerges an exchange to the bad. If the queens are still on the board then any such position is winning for Black on account of White's bad king and Black's immense piece activity. Even some of the endings are favourable for Black.



16.♘e2

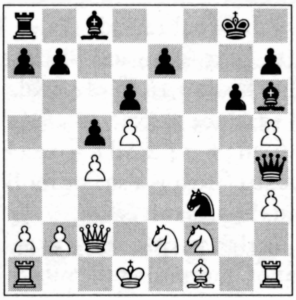
Or 16.♘xf3 (16.♗e2 ♗f5 wins for Black after 17.♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 18.♘xf3 ♗xe4 or 17.♘xf3 ♗xe4) 16...♘xf3+ 17.♔d1 (17.♔e2 ♗f5 wins at once) 17...♗f5 18.♗g3 (18.♗d3 ♘d4! 19.♗xd4 ♕f3+ 20.♕e2 ♕xh1+ 21.♔c2 ♕xa1 and White cannot exploit his temporary initiative) 18...♕e3 19.♗f2 ♕xe4 20.♕xe4 ♗xe4 21.♗g2 ♖f8 followed by 22...♗d3 with an endgame advantage for Black. The clumsy white rooks will be no match for Black's active bishops.

16...♖xf2 17.♘xf2 ♘f3+

Black must be careful, for example 17...♕e3? 18.♗g2 ♗f5 19.♕c1! and Black cannot avoid a queen exchange. 17...♕h4? 18.♕e4 is also bad.

18.♔d1 ♕h4

Not 18...♕e3? 19.♘g4. Referring back to the note to White's 14th move, if hxg6 hxg6 had been interposed, the pawn at g6 would not be en prise.



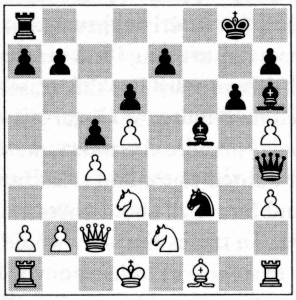
19.♘d3

The only way to avoid losing a piece. 19.hxg6 (19.♘c3 ♘d4 wins the f2 knight) 19...♕xf2 20.gxh7+ ♔h8 21.♕g6 ♕e1+ 22.♔c2 ♕d2+ 23.♔b3 ♕e3+ 24.♔c2 ♗d7! (threatening both 25...♕d2+ 26.♔b3 ♗a4+ and 25...♖f8) 25.♕d3 (25.♖d1 ♖f8) and now Black has a variety of good moves, such as 25...♕xd3+

John Nunn (right), enjoys a joke, whilst Julian Hodgson seems determined to analyse the Modern Defence.

26.♔xd3 ♗f5+ 27.♔c3 ♗g7+ 28.♔b3 ♘d2+ 29.♔a3 (29.♔a4 ♗c2+) 29...♘xc4+ 30.♔b3 ♘d2+ 31.♔a3 b5, or simply 25...♕f2 (threatening 26...♗f5).

19...♗f5



20.♘ec1?

20.♘c3 was the best way to meet the threat of 20...♘e1. Black still replies 20...♘d2 (20...♘e1 21.♕f2 and 20...♘d4 21.♕f2 ♕xf2 22.♘xf2 ♗c2+ 23.♔e1 ♘f3+ 24.♔e2 ♘d4+ are not so good) and now:

A) 21.♕xd2 ♗xd2 22.♔xd2 ♕xc4. The material balance is queen + 2 pawns v rook + 2 minor pieces, just as in the note to White's 15th move, but here Black has a dangerous initiative. The threat is 23...♕d4 followed by 24...c4. Black should at least succeed in winning the d-pawn;

B) 21.b3 (21.♗e2 ♘xc4 is very good for Black) 21...♘xf1 22.♖xf1 ♕xh5+ 23.♘e2 ♕xh3 24.♖xf5 ♕xf5 when Black has three good pawns and a promising attack for the piece.

20...♘d2!

The main function of this move is to prevent White's queen coming to the rescue. The threat is not so much 21...♘xc4, which allows the white queen across, but 21...♕e4! 22.♖g1 ♕e3 and White loses material because 23.♖h1 allows 23...♕f3+.

21.hxg6 hxg6 There is no reason why Black should allow his king to become exposed, e.g. 21...♕e4 22.gxh7+ ♔h8 (22...♔xh7 23.♘e1!) 23.♖g1 ♕e3 24.♕c3+ ♔xh7 25.♖g7+ ♗xg7 26.♕xd2.

22.♗g2

Beliavsky thought until his last few minutes, but there is no defence despite his extra rook: 22.♗e2 ♘xc4 23.♕b3 (the queen cannot come to the kingside and the king no longer has access to e2) 23...♘e3+ 24.♔d2 c4 25.♕xb7 ♖f8 gives Black a crushing attack; 22.♖g1 ♕d4 23.♖h1 ♕e4 drops material as before, and finally 22.♕xd2 ♗xd2 23.♔xd2 ♕xc4 wins the d5 pawn and the game.

22...♘xc4 23.♕f2 Unfortunately 23.♖e1 loses to 23...♕h5+ followed by 24...♘e3.

23...♘e3+ Black need not be satisfied with a favourable ending after 23...♕xf2 24.♘xf2 ♘e3+ but can play directly for mate.

24.♔e2 ♕c4

Now that the white queen has gone to the kingside Black switches to attack from the other side. One threat is 25...♗xd3+ 26.♘xd3 ♕c2+ 27.♔e1 ♕xd3 and White must give up more material to prevent 28...♘c2+.

25.♗f3 ♖f8 Black renews the threat of 26...♗xd3 and 27...♕c2+. White has no effective way to improve his position.

26.♖g1 ♘c2 26...♗xd3+ is also good, but this is even stronger, since a subsequent 27...♘d4+ will win two pieces, at d3 and f3.

27.♔d1 ♗xd3

White resigned.

One of the best games that I have ever played.

Tony Miles was certainly one of the most colourful characters ever to grace the pages of New In Chess. In 1985, he achieved one of his greatest tournament successes ever, by winning the powerful Tilburg tournament. Even more remarkably, he did so whilst lying flat on his stomach on a stretcher. In what must surely be the most remarkable tournament report ever to appear in New In Chess or any other magazine, he described what happened...

The impossible challenge

Tony Miles

I rarely write tournament reports. I don't find them interesting. Also I find it difficult to annotate other players' games to my satisfaction. So whatever this is, it is certainly not a tournament report. It is more a personal diary of what started off for me as a chess tournament and developed into one of the most traumatic months of my life.

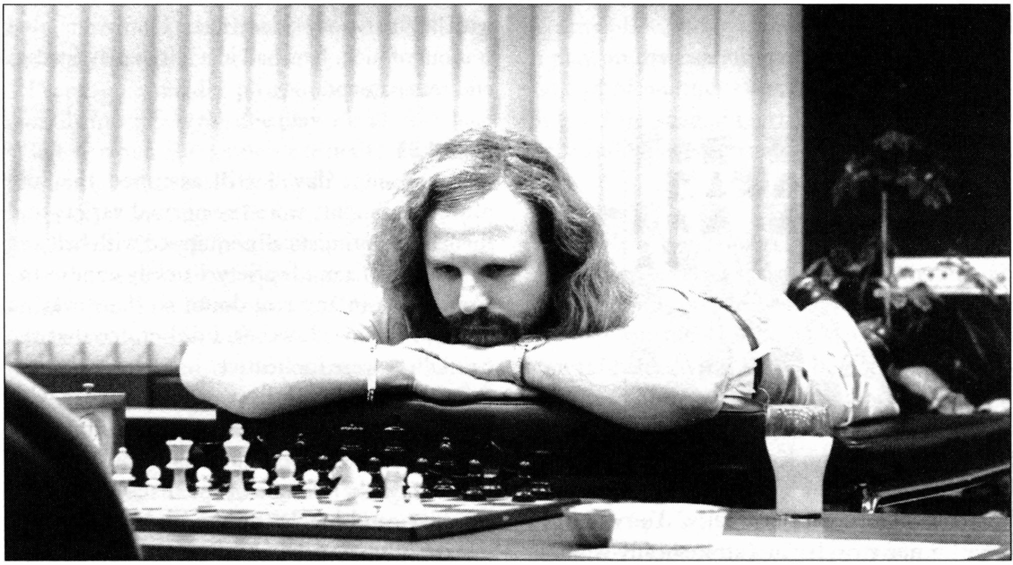
The appropriate place to start is at my birth. I was born with a minor fault in my spine. It's nothing special, just a slight irregularity around the fourth vertebra. Millions of people have such a condition, yet most go through their lives without even discovering it.

The next one and a half decades need not concern us, but at the age of fifteen I strained my back, around the right side of the pelvic girdle, playing cricket. This has often been a source of trouble for me. Normally two or three times a year I experience some discomfort from it. (As it happens the last occasion had been at the Ohra tournament in Amsterdam). On these occasions I simply wear one or two thick leather belts very tight to support the back, take painkillers when I play, lie on my back as much as possible and after a few days the problem disappears. The relevance of this injury to chess is simply that my playing posture – which after about twenty years I find psychologically impossible to change – is just about the worst possible position for such a complaint. I get tonsilitis a lot, too! So much for my medical history. Let us now move on to Tilburg.

The omens for this tournament were not good. I had just played in Berlin (a nine round open swiss) and scored my worst result for years, 5½ out of 8 against the sort of opposition which, with all due respect to them, I expect to annihilate in a blindfold simultaneous display. I had not had a week without a tournament for four months, and felt utterly exhausted and tired of chess. That, I assure you, is no way to approach the dreaded Interpolis. For this reason I actually travelled to Tilburg, or Oisterwijk to be precise, four days before the tournament was due to start. I wanted to try and relax in the countryside, and forget all about chess and the outside world. To try, as Smyslov would put it, to feel again in some sort of harmony with myself, to find a little peace and tranquillity. With hindsight this was probably my most sensible move of the tournament. Each day I went for walks in the nearby woods, kept my pocket set firmly closed, and just about achieved my objective.

August 27

At the opening ceremony somebody asked me if I was going to repeat my previous year's success. Bearing in mind Berlin and my chess-exhaustion I replied: 'If I survive the first week I might.' (After the first week there were many rest/adjournment days). When I used the word 'survive', I would never have believed how close to the truth I was.


FRITS AGTERDENBOS

Tony Miles, having finally reached a comfortable position at Tilburg 1985.

The drawing of lots, was presided over, in the absence of any 'grandmaster of honour' – or horror – by Alexander Münninghoff. He introduced the players, giving me the sort of build-up usually reserved for poor quality boxing promotions: '...the streetfighter, the reigning Interpolis champion, the beast of Birmingham (Good God, I've never heard that one before) ...Tony Miles.' Resisting the temptation to bite his leg, I drew a number Two. I was paired with Kortchnoi in the first round, and Timman in the second, certainly the two players I feared most.

August 28

Miles-Kortchnoi 1-0 (In the original report Tony Miles annotated all his games. For space reasons we had to leave out the analytical part in this anthology – S.G.)

It is not something about which I am particularly proud, but this was the first time in my life I had beaten the terrible Viktor. Perhaps there's something in that country air.

August 29

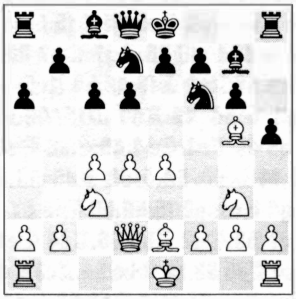
Timman-Miles ½-½

I could hardly be dissatisfied with my start, one and a half points from my two most feared adversaries. Could I really repeat last year's success??

August 30

KI 31.2 – E70
Tony Miles
Oleg Romanishin
Tilburg 1985 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘ge2 c6 6.♘g3 ♘bd7 7.♗e2 h5 8.♗g5 a6 9.♕d2

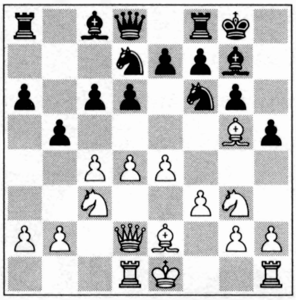


White has an excellent position. Now, though, the real drama began. At first my back felt slightly uncomfortable, then more so as I fidgeted to try and find a better way to sit. My usual problem I supposed. I shouldn't have played cricket fifteen years ago. To my irritation I realised that both the thick leather belt that I use to support my back at such times and my supply of painkillers were at the hotel – half an hour's drive away. I decided to try to bluff it out and not show any discomfort.

9...b5 10.f3

The pain was becoming more severe.

10...0-0 11.♖d1



and I offered a draw. Kortchnoi, standing nearby raised his eyebrows. At the end of the session he asked. 'Did I hear correctly? You offered a draw on move twelve in a strategically winning position?'

Well, eleven, not twelve actually, but I assured him his hearing was okay.

Unfortunately Romanishin is a fighter, and after seven minutes thought he declined and played **11...e5 12.de5?! de5 13.0-0 ♖e8 14.a3 ♕c7∓ 15.♖c1? ♘c5∓ 16.♕e1 ♘b3 17.♖d1 ♗e6 18.cb5 ab5 19.♗d3! ♖ad8 20.♕f2 ♖d7 21.♗b1 ♘d4 22.♗a2 ♗a2 23.♘a2 ♘h7 24.♗e3 ♘f8 25.♘c3 ♘fe6 26.♘ge2 ♖ed8 27.♔h1 ♕b7! 28.♖d2 ♘b3 29.♖d7 ♖d7 30.f4!? ef4 31.♘f4 ♘f4 32.♗f4 b4 33.ab4 ♕b4 34.♗g5 ♘c5 35.♗f6 ♘e4 36.♕f4? ♕d6!□ 37.♕d6 ♘d6 38.♗g7 ♔g7 39.♖d1 ♖e7 40.♔g1 ♘f5 41.♖c1 ♔f6 42.b4 ♖e5−+ 43.♔f2 ♔e6 44.g3 ♘d4 45.♖d1 ♖f5 46.♔g2 ♘c2 47.♖b1 ♘a3 48.♖c1 ♘c4 49.♘e2 ♘e3 50.♔g1 ♔d5 51.♘f4 ♔d6 52.♘e2 ♖d5 53.♘c3 ♖e5 54.♔f2 ♘g4 55.♔g2 f5 56.h3 ♘f6 57.♔f3 ♘e4 58.♖d1 ♔c7 59.♘e2 ♖b5 60.♖d4 ♘g5 61.♔g2 ♘e6 62.♖c4 ♖d5 63.h4 ♔b6 64.♖c3 ♖d2 65.♔f1 ♘c7 66.♔e1 ♖d6 67.♘f4 ♔b5 68.♘d3 ♘a6 0-1**

It was quite clear to me that my back problem was worse than usual. Knowing I had no really strong painkillers with me, I tried to phone my ex-wife Jana for advice. Being a doctor, chess player and well acquainted with my back, she is uniquely qualified to advise me on such matters. The trouble with non-chessplaying tournament doctors is that either they are reluctant to prescribe really strong drugs even when necessary, or they innocently prescribe ones with unfortunate hallucinatory side-effects. Unfortunately I was out of luck. Jana had just left to play a weekend tournament.

August 31

Adjournment day. I still assumed that my physical ailments were the normal variety and turned up optimistically equipped with belt and painkillers of a mild variety. Luckily none of the results was in any real doubt so there was no great problem. However, I did notice that the painkillers were ineffective.

During the break between my games with Kortchnoi and Romanishin (with Timman a draw was agreed without resumption), I disappeared quietly into one of the disused Interpolis offices and lay flat on my back on the floor to ease the pain (It's absolutely the only position that does). At one point Ljubojevic came into the room. He looked bemused and asked what I was doing. 'It's my latest form of yoga' I replied, straight faced. He shrugged and left, shaking his head.

September 1

Things were not getting any better and I was becoming just a little bit concerned.

Miles-Dzindzichashvili ½-½

After the game, at the suggestion of the doctor, I visited a physiotherapist to see if he could be of any help. He massaged my back for about a quarter of an hour. I made another appointment for 11.45 the next day, immediately before the round, and then returned to the hotel to spend as long as possible resting on my back.

September 2

Neither painkilling drugs nor physiotherapy seemed to be having any real effect.

Hübner-Miles 1-0

After the game I succeeded in phoning Jana. Never one to mince words, she gave me a list of four possible, very strong, non-addictive, non-hallucinatory painkillers, and then virtually ordered me to get my next game postponed and rest solidly for as long as possible.

I conveyed my list to the doctor, whose eyebrows raised slightly at the sight. Two of the four I wanted to avoid as they carried slight hallucinatory risk. A third was new and he had never heard of it, but the fourth was possible, and was duly prescribed.

Frankly I consider postponing games to be morally incorrect (So, one player is ill. So what? What if when the game eventually has to be played the other has become ill? It happened to me once). I have never before requested a postponement, though I have frequently acceded to such requests from opponents. But, simply at this time I could not go on. The only alternative would be to withdraw from the tournament. I consulted the tournament rules and discovered that one postponement was possible, provided the tournament doctor considered the illness to be of a sufficiently serious nature. I duly officially requested, and was granted, a postponement of my fifth round game against Polugaevsky. Fortunately Polu already had two adjournments so the next adjournment day was out (September 4th), so it was rescheduled for the 6th (the next adjournment day) unless either of us had an adjournment then, in which case we would play on the free day, the 7th. This gave me two clear days to rest and let the medical profession do their worst.

The one good thing about my game with Hübner was that it had been short, if not entirely painless, so I quickly returned to my hotel bed.

Previously one of the most tortuous times had been the taxi journeys to and from the tournament hall. Now I decided it was time to forget about appearances. Henceforth I confiscated the full back seat of the taxi and spent the journey lying flat on my back.

Late that evening my phone rang. It was Ljubo, asking if I would make up a four for bridge with Kortchnoi and the Dutch journalist (?) Jan Roosendaal. Having spent virtually the last two days confined to my bed and facing the prospect of another two the prospect of a change of scenery was appealing. After all, I did not have to adopt my hunched 'concentration' position to play bridge.

After about half an hour of sitting as comfortably as I could manage I suddenly felt my back seem to 'give way' again, exactly as it had against Romanishin. The rubber was just finishing, but the other players wanted to continue. I looked around desperately for someone to take my place, but to no avail. Eventually I tried to play on, half standing, half kneeling, but by the end of another rubber, I could bear it no longer. I persuaded Gert Ligterink to take my place and hobbled upstairs to my bed.

September 3

A night's attempted rest was no help. The pain was so severe I scarcely slept. Even by the morning I was unable even to walk. I vividly remember journeys to the bathroom. Each time I would haul myself out of bed onto my hands and knees, always taking as much weight as possible on my arms. I would then crawl to the bathroom door. This I would open to the point where it was directly aligned with me. Then I had to drag myself to my feet pulling myself up on the door handles (in my medical history I forgot to mention the chipped bone in my right knee which can't stand kneeling on a hard surface – I really am a wreck!). Keeping virtually all my weight over my hands I would gradually edge along the side of the bath. It wasn't much fun, but I suppose it was one way to pass the time.

I phoned the physiotherapist to explain that I was physically unable to keep my morning appointment. Then I contacted the doctor yet again to see if he had any more bright ideas. He came to see me yet again, but was clearly beginning to give up hope. Almost in desperation he suggested I try a chiropractor. He didn't sound too hopeful. And I was sceptical as I still believed the problem to be essentially muscular rather than spinal. But, as you will appreciate, I was ready to try anything by now.

September 4

I spent the day in bed with the exception of the visit to the chiropractor. It was another interesting experience. He examined me, twisting me this way and that and feeling for irregularities. Quite quickly he said 'Ah yes, that is the problem'.

'Fine' I thought sceptically 'it's the solution I'm interested in.' He instructed me to get on to what subsequently became referred to universally as his massage table (it wasn't the massage table, of course, just a relative). I should lie on the left side, right arm here, left arm there, no, no there, yes, right leg bent, head twisted to the right. He then took a firm grip on my contorted body. I was beginning to feel like a wrestler who had been instructed to throw a fight.

Then suddenly he gripped me tightly. My spine crunched three times rapidly. There was no pain, just the sound, quite clearly audible, of click, click, click. I waited apprehensively wondering if I would be paralysed from the nose down or something. Nervously I waggled a toe or two. They seemed to be working.

'That's better' said the maestro. 'Try standing up.' Incredulously I got to my feet. The pain had virtually vanished. I could scarcely believe it. It seemed like a miracle. On the way out he said something like 'You can come back in two days. If you have any pain I can give you a painkilling injection.' Unfortunately, hearing the words I mispunctuated them as 'You can come back in two days if you have any pain. I can give you a painkilling injection.'

Thus his meaning was that I should return, while my interpretation was that I could if I found it necessary.

Ten minutes later, though, I began to feel pain returning. With hindsight, I realise that it was a completely different pain, but then pain was pain, and that meant trouble.

Later that evening I phoned the Interpolis organisers. I was still clearly not able to play sitting. My last observation was that as there was nothing (well, no more than usual) wrong with my head, I should, in theory at least, be able to play chess. My only idea was that it might be possible for me to play lying down, perhaps in a separate room, I didn't know. It was just a last desperate thought.

September 5

In the morning I received a call to tell me that the problem had been dealt with. Not knowing what to expect I manoeuvred myself into the back of the taxi in my customary fashion, began to dissolve a painkiller in my mouth and wondered what to expect.

I arrived at the tournament hall to find my chair replaced by a full sized massage table at just the right height for me to see the board from my normal angle. From a chessplaying point of view it was ideal for me. My head and shoulders, at least could adopt their usual pose and all the weight was taken off my back. From a medical point of view, I later learnt, it was far from good. The enforced curvature of my spine was definitely not recommended. But for me it was fantastic. I could play chess again.

Ljubojevic-Miles 1-0

At the end of the first session someone had asked Ljubo how it felt playing against a prostrate opponent. He replied that it was a little off-putting for the first few minutes, but after that he hardly noticed.

September 7

The only official rest day. But not for me, as I had to play my postponed game with Polu. As it happened Polu was the one remaining player in the tournament I had never beaten. But he was having a terrible tournament. I toyed with the idea of a short draw. Two things dissuaded me. The first was my win the previous day. The second was the realisation that a win would bring me right back from the depths of despair to actually share the tournament lead. Gradually it dawned on me that I could still win this tournament. There are few things that motivate me more than a challenge, but there is one, and that is an impossible challenge. From this moment on I needed no further incentive. I felt utterly determined. The impossible challenge was clear: to win Interpolis, despite being a virtual cripple.

Miles-Polugaevsky 1-0

So the first cycle was over. Just half a point separated seven of the eight players. Hübner, Kortchnoi and I had 4 out of 7, Polu 2 and the rest were on 50 percent.

September 8

Kortchnoi-Miles 0-1

September 9

After breakfast I happened to meet Kortchnoi. He had seemed a little upset at the end of our game, so I asked if he had found playing against me in such a fashion disturbing. He replied that he had, because he had the feeling he was playing a handicapped person. My response was that he was playing a handicapped person, but physically handicapped, not mentally. At that time I had no idea of the troubles that were brewing.

As it happened I had run out of the painkillers I had been taking so, naturally, I had asked for a fresh supply. I was assured they would be delivered to the hotel that morning. Then, without any explanation, I was asked to come early to the next round to see the doctor. I assumed that this was just to be a routine check before replenishing my supply.

I think I was asked to take a taxi at 11.45 am which seemed ridiculously early compared to the usual 12.15-12.30. I was thus in no great hurry to finish my breakfast. Which I did at about twelve. I was rather puzzled when Constant Orbaan pointed out to me that we were late. I apologised and asked if he had any special reason to arrive early. 'No', he said 'Just to see the doctor'.

On my arrival at the Interpolis building I was ushered into Jan Rennings' office where I was surprised to find all the tournament officials and someone who was introduced to me as the 'official' tournament doctor, though I had had no meeting with him before. At first it seemed like some sort of board meeting, until the doctor began to examine me in none-too-gentle fashion. At one point he suddenly and without warning applied considerable pressure to the side of my back known to be causing most pain. I was stunned. 'Did that hurt?' he enquired. I narrowly resisted the temptation to knee him in the groin and ask the same question. Here I at last came to my senses and asked what the hell was going on. It was explained to me that there had been some unofficial complaints about my massage table. Apparently I moved my legs occasionally and someone didn't like it. I promised to try not to let it happen again (It's not easy lying on your stomach for hours on end without moving your legs, try it some time). 'But couldn't you try sitting normally again just for one day? To see if you can?' My reply was simple and forthright: 'I already did try sitting normally for four days and my condition has not improved sufficiently for me to repeat the test. I accept that you have a perfectly reasonable right to insist that I play from a normal chair, but if you do so I am afraid I will have no alternative but to withdraw from the tournament.'

This concluded the discussion. The doctor gave me some new painkillers in a plain envelope, explaining that the variety I had requested – and had supposed I had been taking for the last week – were unavailable in Holland (!?) but these were virtually the same. Since it was almost time to play I took one hurriedly, and not totally correctly. (It is necessary to dissolve these things under one's tongue, a slow and tedious business taking at least ten minutes. Most probably I swallowed too much for them to have their full effect.) I later asked that, if any such meetings should prove necessary again, they should be held in the evening and not half an hour before play.

Miles-Timman 1-0

September 10

The morning was quite uneventful. No strange phone calls, requests for conferences or anything. All seemed well. I climbed into a taxi at 12.15, lay on the back seat and stuck a painkiller under my tongue.

I arrived at the tournament hall at about 12.50 to find my board, massage table and all had been transferred to a private room. I was informed that an official protest had been filed, signed by four of the players, and was asked if I objected to the move. I replied that I was quite happy to play anywhere that was wished. I did enquire about the contents of the protest and the signatories. Eventually I got to see a copy. It was handwritten by the Dutch journalist Jules Welling, directly copied from Kortchnoi's original he explained, because his handwriting was better. The text was as follows:

Sept. 10, 1985
Dear Sirs,
The players (A) of the ninth Interpolis Tournament express their strong concern about the situation in the tournament. Grandmaster Miles, lying on a massage table, while playing his games, totally changes the view of the playing hall.
Everyone who plays Mr. Miles or even watches him playing, experiences a rather unpleasant odd feeling: psychological equilibrium of the players is out of balance. In a tournament of this standard

all players should play under equal (B) conditions.
We know that Mr. Miles is able to sit in a chair as proved in a restaurant (C) as well in a number of other occasions (D).
We apply to the organizing committee with an urgent request to change this situation.
Yours truthfully
Ljubojevic
Dzindzichashvili
Kortchnoi
Hübner

My comments on the protest:

A) for 'The players' read 'Half the players'

B) 'Equal conditions'. In my opinion asking me to play in severe pain while my opponents are in complete comfort does not strike me as 'equal conditions'.

I would like to stress that the word used is 'equal', not 'identical'. It is clear that under the circumstances 'identical positions' would be impossible, but perhaps 'equal' if somewhat unbalanced conditions might be possible.

In retrospect maybe Dzindzichashvili came closest to achieving equal conditions by effectively handicapping himself in a similar manner to me.

C) Certainly I sat on a chair to eat dinner in the evenings. The hotel did not have room service. I sat in the restaurant, in some pain, but I did not consider it necessary to cry to prove this to my colleagues. Naïvely I thought they might trust my integrity.

D) I can recall no other occasions. Specifically I never even sat to eat breakfast. I ate it standing or walking as this was less stressful.

By one o'clock Romanishin had still not arrived. The arbiter asked if I had any objections to the clocks not being started. Naturally I had none.

At 1.05 Romanishin arrived and was ushered into Jan Rennings' office. For some time noone emerged. I observed wryly that it seemed like waiting for the election of a new pope, never knowing quite when the appropriate smoke would appear. To pass the time I obtained and read a copy of the protest.

After about a quarter of an hour a flushed Jan Rennings emerged and went off in the direction of the tournament hall. As the door was left open and Oleg was sitting alone I took the opportunity to talk to him. Simply, and in my opinion quite reasonably, he had refused to play in a private room and objected to the fact that he had not even been consulted beforehand. We quite understood and were sympathetic to each other's position. He, of course, was not one of the protesters. Only after the tournament did I learn that neither Soviet player had even been asked about their views. At the closing dinner Jan Timman told me that he had twice been approached by Kortchnoi and Ljubojevic, who tried to explain to him that he was being distracted by me without his realising it!

After a while Jan Rennings returned and suggested that our game be postponed. Oleg objected and I supported him. Having read the protest carefully, since my opponent was not one of the protesters the only objection I could see on that day was the actual sight of me. I suggested that this might be remedied by placing a screen in front of the dreaded massage table so that only my opponent would face the terrifying prospect of having to look at me. This was rejected as impractical/unreasonable.

The protesters were hurriedly consulted. Ljubo, I am reliably assured, said that the wording was not what he had meant at all, and it was far from clear that anyone had any objection to my presence except when playing me. All games were duly suspended while board, set, massage table and all were rapidly returned to their usual place. The game eventually started 45 minutes late.

The players were circularized with the following bland letter:

Dear Grandmaster
The tournament committee and the arbiters received an official protest from four participants concerning the presence of the massage-table in the tournament hall.
We should like to discuss this matter with all participants after the round. This meeting will take place at 6.30 p.m. in the Interpolis building.
The tournament committee and the arbiters.

Romanishin-Miles ½-½

At 6.30 the extraordinary meeting commenced. The official report reads:

On Monday September 2nd Miles requested the arbiters to postpone his game against Polugaevsky, which had been planned on Sept. 3 (sixth round), because of his back problems. He pointed out an article of the tournament regulations which makes such a postponement possible. After taking one of the tournament doctor's advice it has been decided to fulfil this request. There had been decided that the game would be played on Sept. 3 or 4 depending on the fact whether Miles or Polugaevsky would have an adjourned game. On Sept. 6 Miles played Ljubojevic on a research table, which e.g. is used by doctors. None of the players protested against this.

For information:

1. The regulations don't prescribe in any way in which posture there has to be played, the players attitude mustn't be a disturbing one.

2. The tournament doctors, including a specialist, had the opinion, independent of each other, that to play chess sitting would be a very painful posture for Miles.

On Sept. 8 and 9 Miles played Kortchnoi and Timman respectively on the research table. On Sept. 10 (approx. 11.20) a protest was lodged by Kortchnoi, also on behalf of Dzindzichashvili, Hübner and Ljubojevic in Hotel Bosrand.

The protest was saying, that everybody who is playing Miles or is even looking at him while he is playing, is getting an unpleasant feeling: it throws off the psychological balance.

By handing over the protest Kortchnoi requested to settle the case before twelve o'clock.

The Russian Grandmasters Polugaevsky and Romanishin didn't know about the contents, while Timman distanced himself from the protest.

The tournament committee and the arbiters had a meeting in the Interpolis building at noon.

1. The game Romanishin-Miles, Miles playing on his research table, was to be played in a different room, in order to come forward to the objections of the protesting players, that facing Miles, playing lying, puts them out of balance.

2. If there would be any objections by Romanishin and/or Miles because of playing under the conditions of point 1, the game would be postponed.

3. At 18.30 there was to be a meeting with all eight grandmasters, the tournament committee and the arbiters.

At 12.50 p.m. Miles arrived, who had no objection.

At 13.02 p.m. Romanishin arrived, who refused to play under these circumstances. He demanded, that his game would be played in the playing-hall, just where the other games would be played.

After that it was decided, confirm point 2, to delay the game. Romanishin objected against this decision. Ljubo, who had heard about this delayment, informed that he wouldn't have any objection if the game Romanishin-Miles would be played in the playing-hall.

He didn't have the intention with the protest to stop Miles playing his games in the tournament hall.

Also Hübner, Dzindzichashvili, and Kortchnoi didn't have any objection that the game Romanishin-Miles would be played in the tournament hall (A). After that, the clocks were stopped. The old situation was restored. The game Romanishin-Miles started at 13.45 p.m.

The meeting of 18.30 was presided over by tournament manager J. Rennings and opened with the announcement that the problem was clear, but that the tournament committee and the arbiters didn't have a solution. Miles explained why he could only play lying down, and if this wouldn't be allowed anymore he would have to withdraw.

Some players refused to play Miles lying down. Hübner would withdraw (if he would be forced to) since he knew in advance that he couldn't play a game under these circumstances in a normal way. (Relevant in this case is, that the tournament committee (B) and the arbiters have the opinion, that everything that's possible should be done, without harming the individual interest of the players, in order that none of the players will leave the tournament prematurely). Miles remarked, that it had been written in the protest letter, that he had been seen sitting at several occasions. He asked which were the occasions, apart from the restaurant Hotel Bosrand.

He didn't get a reply.

Kortchnoi remarked, that all kinds of tournaments exist: women tournaments, tournaments for the blind, tournaments for the disabled etc., but here we are talking of a tournament of healthy players. Timman answered that in 'normal' tournaments blind people, disabled persons, women etc. are able to play. Hübner remarked that he was willing to agree a draw prematurely (C). Miles accepted this proposal (D). Dzindzichashvili announced to play

standing up against Miles lying down. Ljubojevic and Polugaevsky agreed to play against Miles lying down, under the conditions, which they would discuss personally with him (E). The audience agreed (F) with the solutions.
Lastly it was agreed, that nobody of the audience would make announcements about what was said in this meeting. Mr. Vael was delegated by the meeting to inform the press (G), that every grandmaster who still had to play Miles, will make a personal agreement with him.
G. Gijssen, arbiter
C. Orbaan, arbiter
J. Rennings, chairman

Well, as players meetings go, that was certainly unique in my experience.

My observations on the official report.

A) Then why the hell had he signed it?

B) And myself, since you mention it

C) 'Prematurely'. To be specific: Here and then. With no option on either side to recant, even if my physical condition recovered sufficiently to allow a 'normal' game. At first this might (and did to me) sound somewhat extreme, but on reflection it's not unreasonable. Otherwise I could theoretically at least wait and if the tournament situation demanded it claim I felt much better and wanted to play. The arbiters pointed out that in principle such an arrangement was completely irregular, but under the circumstances... well, practical considerations seemed to override regularity.

D) Reluctantly; and specifying that he did so solely because it was apparently the only way to avoid a withdrawal. (By a curious coincidence ten years earlier at Teesside 1975 Hübner had forfeited against me in the last round. The reason was that in his initial invitation, months before the event, the timetable gave the last round as starting at the same time as the others. At the start of the tournament he was given a program which gave the last round as starting, in obscene British tradition, at 9 a.m. He flatly refused to play. Thus I had no doubts about his sincerity in this case.

E) Specifically 1. Polu asked that I play from a separate table, coming to the official board only to make my moves, but in the case of the last hour say, or time shortage my massage table could be brought to the official table. This I agreed to. As it happened on the night before our game he asked about my health, and then kindly offered to let me play under my 'normal' conditions. I gratefully accepted. 2. Ljubo agreed to play under my 'normal' conditions as it was 'for my health'. The night before that game he too had a change of mind, deciding to play himself from a separate table.

F) 'Agreed', I think 'accepted' is the more appropriate word.

G) 'That every ... him'. Read 'as little as possible'!

September 11

Adjournment day. Since Polu had resigned I had only my game with Timman to complete. This passed without incident or protest.

September 12

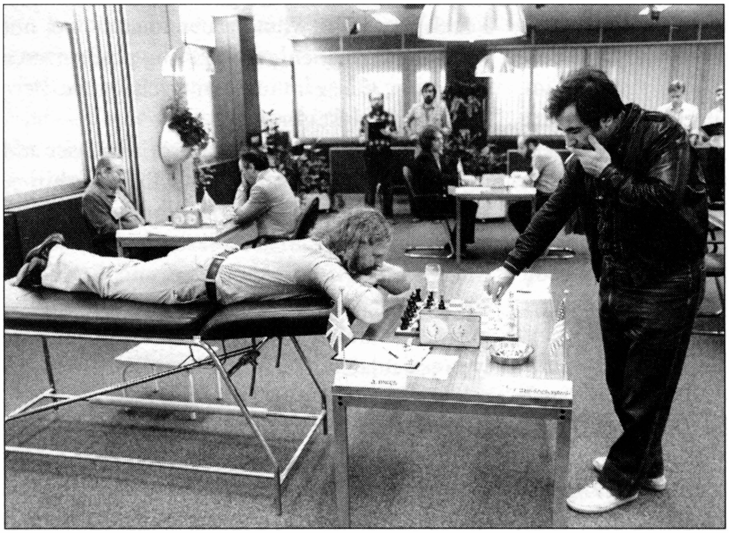
Dzindzichashvili-Miles ½-½

The fact that I had no opponent opposite me for most of the game did not bother me. The only nuisance occurred when another player came to look at the position and, there being nothing in his way stood very close to the board. This did irritate me a little (though not as much as Dzin's theoretical novelty 9.e4). Basically I took Dzin's approach as a joke. In the evening I spoke to Hübner and asked what he wanted to do about our 'game', whether he wanted to play just one or two moves to make it clear the result was prearranged, or to trundle out the customary phoney dozen. He answered that he was quite content to play just two.

Some time later word of this reached the tournament organisers. We were approached in friendly fashion and asked if we could play a few more moves, for appearances. Somewhere the number five was mentioned.

Still later I met Geurt Gijssen, the arbiter: 'Please make the five moves sensible'. 'Of course', I replied and went to eat. Crossing the road to the restaurant I met Hübner coming the other way. I told him of the latest request. 'Oh no', he said 'it was always my intention that the moves should be utterly stupid'. 'Well, okay', I said 'I'll play sensible moves, you do what you like, and I'll offer a draw on move five.'

Over dinner I pondered my back. It was still



Dzindzichashvili's solution to the 'Miles Problem': treat it as a simul!

giving severe pain. Perhaps another visit to the chiropractor was worth a try. Since I was not exactly going to be busy the next day I decided to arrange it.

September 13

Friday 13th part one

Tony Miles
Robert Hübner
Tilburg 1985 (12)

1.d4 e5

I had had the slight fear that Robert might really do the job properly with 1...f6 and 2...g5. I had two ideas against this. The first was to avoid 2.e4. The second, which I would probably have adopted, was to play 2.e4 g5 then pick up my queen, slam it down on h5 and then 'j'adoube' it to g4.

2.de5 ♕h4 3.♘f3 ♕a4 4.♘c3 ♕a5 5.e4

Drawn.

'Scandal' screamed certain factions of the press. 'Insult to the tournament'.

The public at first seemed bemused, but soon understood. Hübner had made his protest, though what exactly it was directed against was not clear. I suppose in a way I had made my own protest too. I just wanted to be able to play normal chess, and in this case I was not permitted to.

I visited the chiropractor again and our previous misunderstanding became clear. The contortions were repeated, but only one gentle crunch this time. As before the effect was almost instantaneous, but again it did not last. I returned to the tournament hall for a short time before going back to my hotel room. As it happened I shared the taxi to Oisterwijk with Hübner. We discussed the problem perfectly amicably. His viewpoint, protest or whatever was undoubtedly sincere. He genuinely found (or would have found) it deeply disturbing to play against someone in my condition.

I posed a hypothetical question: It's unlikely, though quite possible, that a severely disabled person will become a strong chess player, but it's quite feasible (especially with my driving) that a top grandmaster could be badly injured, say in a car crash, and be forced to play in some such unusual fashion. Should he be barred from playing? (A non-hypothetical instance also occurred to me. I know a spastic chess player in England. His chess is of club player standard, but he is completely physically uncoordinated and can move the pieces only with his mouth. Chess is the great joy in his life. Wouldn't it be inhuman to ban him?)

Robert's reply was straightforward. If such a player was to participate in a tournament, others should be informed in advance. He, then, would refuse the invitation.

September 14

A free day! As my game with Dzin had been agreed drawn it really was free. Things (my back excepted) were looking fantastic. With Kortchnoi's adjournment against Polu deadly drawish I had a whole point lead over Hübner and one and a half over the rest of the field. The impossible challenge was no longer even looking difficult. Two draws would surely suffice to clinch first place. But you can never relax.

A loss for me and a win for Hübner (who had White against the off-form Dzindzi) and everything could go.

I prepared a particular line for Polu. With hindsight perhaps I over-prepared it. There was a second variation I wanted to look at, but never got around to it.

That evening I received a phone call from the German player and journalist Jacoby, a good friend of Hübner (though I intend no improper inference in this observation). He wanted an interview for *Der Spiegel* that night.

'Well', I explained 'I'm sorry, but I don't give interviews in the middle of tournaments. I'd be delighted to at the end.'

'But I have to return to Germany tomorrow.'

'But there are things I've promised not to discuss. I probably couldn't answer most of your questions anyway. After the tournament would be much better'.

'Well, if there are questions you can't answer we'll leave those and I'll phone you after the tournament.'

Eventually I agreed. Why? Well, with all the pressure and hostility I had experienced in the preceding days I really felt the need to justify myself. As far as possible I had remained silent throughout all arguments, and acceded to every request -bar one- that I could. But there is a limit to how long one can go on without defending oneself, and I finally succumbed.

As for the interview, it started with the sort of question ('Where were you born?') to which the interviewer knew the answer perfectly well already, and progressed to certain things which frankly were none of Herr Jacoby, *Der Spiegel*, or anybody else's bloody business. I left after an hour or so somewhat upset and not a little angry.

September 15

Round 13 (or was it Friday 13th postponed?)
Polugaevsky Miles 1-0

To make matters worse Dzindzi had blundered against Hübner and Ljubojevic had slaughtered Timman. As I left the tournament hall dejectedly, Michael Stean, who had just arrived to visit the tournament for a few days, told me that Kortchnoi was losing to Romanishin.

I was shattered, depressed, mentally and physically, exhausted. In one stupid tired game I had blown the whole tournament – no, not just the tournament, the fighting performance of my life, the again impossible challenge. Psychologically I was broken.

The last round would start with Hübner and myself on 7½ and Ljubo and Romanishin 7, with the last round pairings Romanishin versus Hübner and Miles versus Ljubojevic. A nervebreaker if ever there was one. Suddenly the news came that Kortchnoi had turned the position round in time trouble and won. Quickly I recalculated. Assuming Kortchnoi drew his unfinished game with Polu, and this was something I always had forebodings about – I've seen Viktor scrape points from too many 'dead drawn' positions – it would be Hübner and myself 7½ Ljubojevic and Kortchnoi 7. Kortchnoi had Black against Timman in the last round. That, at least, wouldn't be easy for him.

My morale was about as low as it could go. I tried to rationalise my way back to life. I had white. Ljubo is a player I usually do well against. A draw might well be sufficient, almost certainly in fact (I would now settle for sharing first place) as Hübner had black against Romanishin. He hadn't won a game with black in the entire tournament. He'd draw. Or maybe even Oleg the fighter would do him over. My holding Ljubo would keep him out of it. Kortchnoi, well you can never write him off, but in a one-off situation to win against Timman with black is a stiff task. And even then he would only catch, not overtake me.

On the other hand if I lost ... No, don't even think about it.

September 16

The last adjournment day. I had an appointment with the chiropractor, but the time was not fixed. I had no doubt that the Interpolis machine would arrange all and a taxi would appear in due course.

In the afternoon I was (as usual) lying on my hotel bed. I recognized voices in the corridor outside. Michael Stean was talking to Viktor. 'I must be your lucky mascot' I heard him say. My heart sank. I knew there was no need to make the journey to the door to check, but I did. Polu had blundered incredibly and lost.

So now it was Hübner, Kortchnoi and myself

7½ Ljubo 7. I had mentally prepared for this eventuality and concluded that it was the one circumstance where I should really try to beat Ljubo. There was now too much risk of one of the other results going wrong. Five years before I wrote 'If there's one thing about tournaments I like, it's winning. Second I hate'. It still applies.

I tried to rationalise again. There were still two factors in my favour. Firstly I had white, and my rivals all black. Secondly Ljubo clearly had to go all out to win.

He had nothing to lose. The fifth place player was lost in the distance. Surely I could use this factor.

But a loss ... no.

A little later the phone rang. 'Two journalists want to interview you urgently'.

'Not till after the tournament', I replied, firmly this time.

'That's what I told them – just checking.'

'But what happened with the chiropractor?'

'Oh, I completely forgot. I'll call him'.

'Do you know what he wants to do?' I explained that I was worried about the effects I seemed to experience the day after seeing him.

It turned out that he just wanted to give me a painkilling injection. 'No possible side-effects?' I asked nervously. 'None' he assured me. As he prepared the injection I tried to explain my worries. 'Your main concern is my health. Mine is finishing this tournament, preferably winning it and only then my health.' The needle scored a bullseye on the tender spot. 'It should last for about three days', he said. I mentioned that I'd felt fairly lousy the day after visiting him before. 'Quite a normal reaction', he said 'But let's take a look'. At this he started feeling gently in the area of my lymph nodes, but concentrating on the bones: 'Aha' he said (I kid you not) 'You have a slight problem in the head'(!!) 'Actually I'd known about that for years. I thought it was an occupational hazard. I didn't realise it was only slight though.'

'No, no, seriously' ...feeling... 'I won't manipulate it, just ...' His voice trailed away as he concentrated, twiddling with I know not what. Nothing violent, no crunching. After a few seconds he said simply 'That's it', and we went our separate ways.

Somehow as I paced outside the empty hospital I began to feel more positive (Did he really do something to my head?? He and the Almighty only can know.) I was sharing the lead. I had White against Ljubo – probably my favourite opponent of the tournament – to come. Things weren't so bad. If I'd been asked three weeks before if I'd accept this situation, I'd have jumped at it. Gradually my self belief began to grow again.

Back at the hotel I planned my approach to the game. More rationalisation. A draw was not so bad. It would probably share first. But Ljubo would have to go all out to win. I briefly toyed with the idea of offering an obscenely early draw to really put all the pressure on him.

Anyway I decided on the opening. A quiet ultra-solid Réti-English giving Black as little active play as possible. Nothing messy. Keep it simple and stifle him. He'd have to stir up trouble himself, and then I'd go for him.

September 17

Miles Ljubojevic 1-0

Kortchnoi had won and Hübner was just finishing too. I climbed from my massage table for the last time, the sense of relief was overwhelming. I was congratulated by all and sundry. I noticed the handshakes. Some were perfunctory and formal, a few a little reluctant and begrudged, but most came with enormous warmth and sincerity.

I made for Jan Rennings' office. His bar is always well stocked.

September 18

I woke up with raging tonsilitis.

Postscript

A) Medical

The diligent reader will have noticed that at no point in this article have I actually explained what was wrong with my back. The reason is that I had no idea, and none of the doctors told me. After the tournament a specialist informed me that it was 'lumbago due to a prolapsed disc'.

For the medically uninitiated this means back pain (lumbar agony seems the appropriate elaboration of lumbago) caused by the cartilage between two vertebrae (4 and 5) giving way to the extent that any pressure on the spine squashed it, nerves and all.

One of the great ironies of the tournament was that, before the great meeting of September 7 the organisers asked the doctor for a letter stating that it was necessary to play as I was on the massage table. This he was unable to do because, having seen photographs of my playing posture, he realised that the curvature of the spine still risked serious pressure on the weakened spot.

As for the future, I am still, two weeks after the tournament, unable to walk or sit for any period of time without serious discomfort. Only months of gradual exercise will restore my condition (which was never too good at the best of times). It is, of course, a common thing for those with a sedentary occupation to neglect their physical condition, and I can only admit my negligence. Now it seems I have little choice.

B) Personal

'Generally speaking there are nothing but good relations between top players' – Jan Timman in the issue of New In Chess that came out during the tournament! Well, it's true, still!

In all professional sports nerves can get frayed in the heat of battle, and players can become less than rational. I recall remarking at one time that it didn't seem like a chess tournament any more, more like war. And that wasn't in reference solely to the players. One could sense journalists and others beginning to take sides, looking the other way as I came into a room and the like.

As for the protesters, well, Hübner's viewpoint I understand easily. He is exceptionally sensible to surroundings. Dzindzi's, rightly or wrongly I can only take as a joke. With Kortchnoi and Ljubo it's more difficult. As I understand it their rationale went: at first, I had a back problem. Then I won a game or two lying down. The back recovered but I saw the massage table as a great psychological weapon to disturb them, and so continued to 'fake' the injury.

The opinions of the three doctors, one physiotherapist and one chiropractor they neglected. I must say that I would never sign such a protest myself, and bitterly resented the wording. Were the players really disturbed? Well frankly I find it hard to believe that by merely lying down I could demolish some of the best players in the world. When one starts playing one is aware of the opponent, but once the game gets underway only the pieces are seen.

Kortchnoi's fighting spirit is renowned. One has only to consider his three final wins. But from many a world championship and candidates match it is also clear that it can extend beyond the chess board. I don't regard it as malicious, merely a part of his personality that is necessary to sustain his over the board aggression.

Ljubo, I believe was disturbed, not by me though, but by himself. His anti-massage table ploy of playing from a separate board in my opinion only handicapped himself. Even at the closing dinner he was clearly bitter. From a nearby table he called across acidly 'Ah Doctor Miles' (I'm not but it's his customary form of address) 'I see you are very happy. Probably you are the most happily sitting person here'.

If anything really hurt me, it was that comment. But two days later as I drove (Yes, I know driving requires sitting. It's an unfortunate necessity. As it happens my car seats have a particularly good shape for supporting the back!) away he smiled and waved goodbye cheerfully. (Maybe he was just glad to see the back of me?! Ooh, sorry.)

So it is. Chess is a competitive sport and such things happen occasionally. I bear no animosity, and expect none. The next tournament will be back to normal. Generally speaking there *are* nothing but good relations between top players.

Lastly I would like to thank Messrs. Polugaevsky, Romanishin and Timman for their behaviour and understanding. Particularly Polu. Temperamentally, if anyone was likely to be disturbed by me, it was him, yet he made no complaint. If I had to lose a game in the closing stages – and that was certainly not my intention – I find it quite appropriate that he should be the beneficiary.

Tilburg 1985: 1-3 Miles, Hübner, Kortchnoi 8½; 4 Ljubojevic 7; 5-7 Polugaevsky, Romanishin, Timman 6; 8 Dzindzichashvili 5½.

Chess is not just about world champions and GM tournaments. One of the things which make the chess world great is the number of talented amateurs, who devote their lives to various aspects of the game, and New In Chess has always liked to reflect their contribution. In 1987/3, the magazine interviewed Dutch novelist Tim Krabbé. No mean player (he played in the final of the 1967 Dutch Championship), Krabbé's main interest in recent years has been chess curiosities, a field in which he has taken over the mantle of the famous American chess writer, Irving Chernev.

Tim Krabbé, king of chess curiosities

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

For Tim Krabbé (1943) writing, cycling and chess have more in common than would seem at first sight. His love of numbers brought him under the spell of these seemingly so different activities, and he eventually managed to score successes in all three fields as a writer and a journalist.

As a novelist he broke through to a wider audience with his latest short novel *Het Gouden Ei* (The Golden Egg), which was very favourably received and sold well. The film rights have been sold and in September shooting will start in France and Holland. This is not his first novel that was turned into a film, nor will it be the last as far as he is concerned, for the novel he is currently writing, he assures us, might even be more suitable.

At thirty, Tim Krabbé decided to make a boy's dream come true and started a career as an amateur cyclist which, during the next eight years, would take him from one race to the other. The experience and impressions he garnered on and around the roads he described in numerous newspaper articles, as well as in his magnificent book *De Renner* (The Cyclist), which found an enthusiastic reception both within and without the world of cycling. A prominent sports journalist called it '...not only a literary masterpiece ... but at the same time the best sports book in the Dutch language'.

In the world of chess, however, Tim Krabbé is mainly known as the king of chess curiosities. Although his merits as a player were not at all bad, and he twice got through to the finals of the Dutch championship, he was well aware of the limits of his talent, and driven by his great love of the bizarre and the beautiful in chess, a restless search for what he was later to call chess curiosities, became his main chess activity. His many contributions on this subject in *Chess Life*, *Schaakbulletin* and *New In Chess* were highly appreciated and led to a few books initially only in Dutch. But in 1985 the English-language *Chess Curiosities* (published by George Allen and Unwin) appeared and immediately met with recognition when the readers of the journal *Chess Notes* voted it book of the year.

Anyone familiar with his books will have an idea of the witty enthusiasm and infectious single-mindedness with which Tim Krabbé treats subjects like Nimzowitsch' gratis move, the Babson task, remarkable coincidences, or 46.0-0 in the game Bobotsov-Ivkov. Even his dreams -another hobby of his, by the way- are haunted by his 'disastrous craving for completeness', and he frequently dreams about castlings at move 79 not yet in his collection. A recurrent daydream he hopes to realise one day is a thousand-page tome entitled *All The Chess Curiosities.*

– *What caused this love of chess curiosities?*

'I have always had this interest, I don't know why, in the odder side of chess. I vividly remember my first look at the game Edward Lasker against Janowski from New York 1924, which ends with an utterly crazy endgame of two knights and three connected passed pawns on the seventh rank against a queen, with Black having a passed pawn as well. I could look at that final diagram for hours. Another strong memory is a game Spassky-Polugaevsky from the 1960 or 1961 Soviet championship, in which Spassky has his king stroll across a full board to g5 and could have won if he had pushed on to f6. I got *Chess Archives* containing that game with this diagram full of pieces and the white king on g5, and showed it to a chess friend who happened to call. We were standing there with the diagram in our hands, 'Gee, how is this possible?' when my brother came in and asked, 'Why are you laughing.' When he saw it was a chess diagram, he looked at us with a face that said: 'Those two are stark raving mad.'

'He is not a chess player, but there were also chess players who reacted that way. I do not know why such a king on g5 moves my soul. I started chess like everybody else, I wanted to become champion, no matter what, but by twenty I had long realized that I wasn't world champion, or even master, material. One naturally adjusts one's ambitions according to reality, and eventually my ambition has shrunk to reaching the Dutch championship final, which was at least feasible. I belonged to the top twenty players of Holland for a few years, but never to the top ten. I did not fancy to go on playing chess at that level for the rest of my life. So at thirty when I took up cycling, I just called it a day. Being number twenty or thereabouts in Holland made me feel so old. So I stopped playing serious chess for ten years, and now that I have really become an old man, I can play my pathetic old man's game without too much self-reproach.'

– *But you never lost sight of the curiosities?*

'No, that continued. Around 1970 I started taking notes. My first chess pieces appeared in Wouter van Rhoon's *Schaakrevue*, a kind of precursor of *Schaakbulletin.* That was in 1967. But this went broke, and shortly afterwards Wim Andriessen started up *Schaakbulletin*, with which I was involved fairly from the beginning. What I wanted to show as a chess writer was a mixture of beauty and the bizarre, but always within chess itself. Never outside it. If a certain tournament had attracted three one legged players I would not have been in the least interested. That tends towards a German kind of humour that doesn't agree with me at all. People sometimes associate me with this, and that I find insulting. 'I know about a tournament for you where in round three all White's were bald and all Black's wore glasses.' I'm not interested in that kind of thing.'

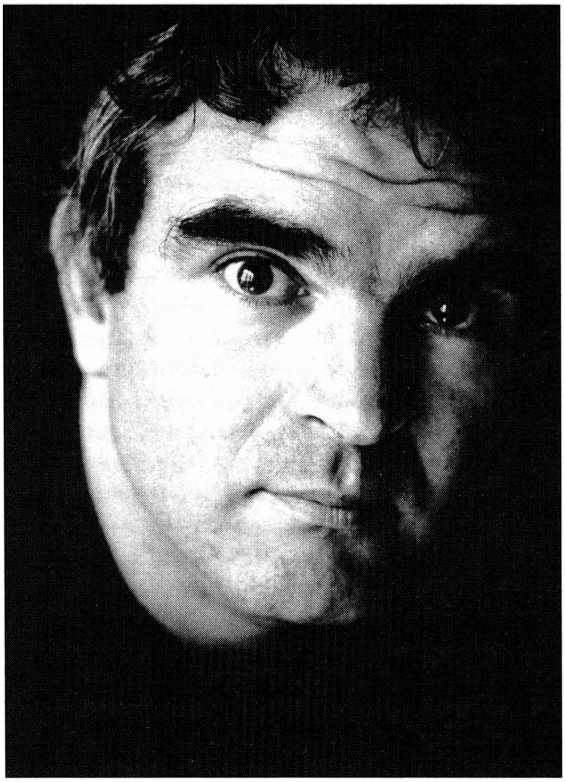
– *But writing about coincidences in chess you joyfully report the symmetrical game played by Messrs Weiss and Schwarz in Nuremberg 1883.*

'I have my weak moments. If there is a funny game of Weiss with white against Schwarz with black I cannot help noticing it, might even think it's wildly funny, and would probably publish it. But my interest has shifted. The purely bizarre I found far more fascinating in the beginning than now. Collecting all this material I have come across such an unbelievable number of beautiful things that my interest has shifted more towards pure technical beauty.'

– *How do you go about garnering your material. What are your bibles?*

'My bibles are chess magazines. I subscribe to about ten of them at the moment, and when they arrive I leaf through them and take notes of everything that rouses my interest. That is a rather cursory job. I look at all diagrams and if, for example, the magazine has endgame studies I try to have a glance at what they are about, that is, if they give the solution with the diagram. So I make these notes, which I sort in maps, and in the course of nearly twenty years this has grown into a system of nearly fifty loose-leaf files of about two hundred pages each, with about ten notes on each page. That makes some hundred thousand notes of sources, under some five hundred different headings. Now and then I start a new category when I see something very nice, but that's a rarity these days. The headings are mainly technical, and some of them have grown impractically large. Categories like, for instance, 'Practical Stalemate', would have to be subdivided.

In all those books on chess tactics the same few examples keep cropping up for ages, because nobody does the necessary research. Always the Lazdies-Zemitis stalemate, however stale it has grown. I am possibly unique in that I am not satisfied with one or ten examples of something. I want them all. I keep track of everything. Only, the computer age has made my archives rather obsolete. It should all be on computer, so you could call it up with a few strokes.'



Tim Krabbé – acclaimed novelist, passionate amateur cyclist, and the world's greatest collector of chess curiosities.

– *You have no intention of doing this retrospectively?*

'I have. The normal course of events with archives like mine is that, when the maker dies, they end up on the rubbish dump. Mine would fit into one refuse bag, if stuffed carefully. That would be a pity, however. It should be computerized and saved, and if I were five persons instead of one, one of me would gladly do that. But as it is, I think I should be subsidized to have this done. I think my archives are interesting and worth preserving. When I study my predecessors in chess literature, Kurt Richter, Assiac, Chernev, Reinfeld, I can see they had far less complete archives than me. They had to rely on rather loose notes. None of them has ever collected as much as me, or suffered from the same *Gründlichkeit*, thoroughness.'

– *Is the difference that you, as you put it yourself, suffer from this disastrous craving for completeness?*

'That's one difference, yes. When I have sixty examples of, say, the *Zwickmühle*, it is clear I cannot publish them all. I have to sort out the best ones. But with ten or fifteen examples, I have a problem – then I cannot keep from publishing them all. Now, there is a typical combination where queenside castling checks a king on d8 and wins a rook on b2. You will find this combination in each and every book on tactics, but always the same, Feuer-O'Kelly, Liège 1934, which in itself is a good example. In *Chess Curiosities*, I have given twelve or thirteen examples, including one from an endgame study. Too many of course, but in such a situation I cannot resist giving them all, out of pure joy that I am the only person in the world who has collected so many.'

– *Have you any other sources besides the magazines?*

'Yes, an enormous number of books, too. I leaf through lots of them, including the classics. *300 Schachpartien* by Tarrasch was my bedside book for a long time, and I also like writers like Nimzowitsch, Polugaevsky and Kmoch. A very important standard work is *De Schaakstudie* by Rueb. It is the study Bible, arranged according to themes. It only goes as far as 1950 and has a very peculiar style, he must have been a very peculiar gentleman. But that's a fantastic work, it goes back to the Arabs.'

– *During the thorough treatment of all kinds of phenomena you regularly surprise the reader with little historical facts. I found it very nice, for example, to read a short history of the underpromotion in the chapter of that name, and to learn that until about 1900 the rule was that a pawn could only* *promote to a piece which had already been captured, so that one side could never have two queens or three knights, and one chess set sufficed. Do you do historical research to unearth such facts?*

'Well, no, one has one's sources for that. I am no historian. In the White Christmas Series you have *The Theory of Pawn Promotion*. White has done that research for me, and he also refers to other articles. A man who has been invaluable to me is Rob Verhoeven of the chess department of the Royal Library in The Hague, who traces such things for me. Without someone like him life would be much more difficult, although I am often able to find my own way. But tracing back this history of the promotion you come across tremendously interesting things. For instance, that the first official international tournaments were still played with the rule that a pawn could remain a pawn upon reaching the other side, so that you have a choice of five promotions.'

– *This rule was on the books as late as Vienna 1873.*

'Yes, Vienna 1873 was probably the last tournament in which it was used. But the rules of the game had not been laid down so well, yet. There was no international chess federation. Rules often differed from village to village. Several grandmasters even now tell you they learnt to play chess with very odd rules. Sosonko once told me that he had learnt chess from his mother, who taught him White always begins with d2-d4 and e2-e4 as a double first move. I myself have learnt chess with the rule that if you got your king to the other side you were allowed to choose five new pieces.'

– *The standardization of the rules of underpromotion may have taken so long because of its relative rareness.*

'In the entire history of chess, only around ten real and relevant underpromotions, that is promotions to rook or bishop, have occurred in games. But there are millions of perfectly natural positions in which this could occur. Every week in my magazines I encounter new natural underpromotions which could quite easily have happened in games.'

– *Writing about underpromotions you say: 'promotion to knight is a fairly frequent occurrence, but of course this is not a real underpromotion: the knight covers squares that could not otherwise be covered.' How important a part do such quibbles play within your work?*

'Such sophistries? Well, they do play a part, I do take some pleasure in discovering odd lacunae in the chess rules. I wrote about the difference between static and dynamic identity when this difference still went unnoticed and unacknowledged in the rules. These are properties of a position that you cannot photograph; can White still castle and to which side, can he capture en passant? This matters in the repetition rule, which has now been adjusted in that respect. It was nicely illustrated in the recent Interpolis tournament, in Karpov-Miles. When it was pointed out to Karpov, he was aware that the position in which he claimed a draw, had been repeated three times only statically and not dynamically. What he did not know was that wrongly claiming a draw carries a five minute penalty. These things interest me. Say you have this position: White king f2, pawn b7; Black king hl, and you want to promote your pawn on b8. You put it beside the board, take a queen from among your captured pieces, put that on the board, and, holding on to it, you cry 'Oh no', throw away the queen, and put a rook in its place. That is mate in two, whereas otherwise it would have been stalemate. The rules are not clear on this, they say nothing about it. Whether the *pièce touchée* rule applies to pieces outside the board is, to say the least, fuzzy. I like that.'

– *They are rather absurd things which may have a certain amount of relevance.*

'This could certainly be relevant as it is a very natural game situation.'

– *But one can imagine a serious person saying, 'This is all very nice but to occupy your time with that...'*

'But that's where I am different. A serious person, to me, is someone who wants to become chess champion of the world. Which leaves open the question of how serious that is. Isn't it the height of absurdity to want to become chess champion of the world? That is, in the eyes of a Uruguayan soccer star, or an Eskimo chieftain. The answer is that such things have value in themselves. This is a moralistic problem I have written about in *Chess Curiosities*. Take for instance the typical preface in problem and endgame study books. An over the board grandmaster is seduced to write a sympathetic word, saying how much the tournament player can benefit from studying endgame studies or even problems. But in general chess books again an authority figure from a larger world, this time a politician or a scientist, utters the well-known nonsense about chess developing such desirable character traits in people. So it seems always an excuse is needed, although never more than one pretence upwards. I have never looked for excuses. I like to quote Hans Ree, here, who simply said: 'Chess is beautiful enough to waste your life on.' To me, that sums it up. Once you start looking for excuses, you will end up needing an excuse for being happy.'

I like to quote Hans Ree: 'Chess is beautiful enough to waste your life on'

– *But you don't mind moralizing yourself either.*

'Not at all. I react against a morality that I don't like and that is often false, because those people who ask for a preface to their little problem book often do not subscribe to that view at all themselves.'

– *Do you, as a rule, get a lot of reactions on your articles and books?*

'Yes, a lot. After that record article (New In Chess 85/4 and 85/11) I got at least twenty letters from all over the world from people who had improvements or liked it, as well as requests from foreign magazines to write something. I have several permanent correspondents, some of whom roughly know what I collect, and when they see something I will like they send it on. *Chess Curiosities* wouldn't have been what it is without people like Rob Verhoeven or someone like René Olthof, who keeps me informed of late castlings, games of over 150 moves, the excelsior theme in games, and many other things. I do need help, it's hard enough to keep up with the magazines. But the bulk of the work has to be done by myself.'

– *In* Chess Curiosities *you offer a fortune to anyone able to send you a copy of the* Dziennik Poznanski *which is supposed to contain the game Tylkowski-Wojciechowski, a game which featured the same miraculous combination in 1931 as Ortueta-Sanz, Madrid 1933. Did you ever get a reaction to that?*

'No. But through Litmanowicz I did track down a Mr. Rozanski, who was still living in Poznan and had witnessed this unique game. I wrote him a letter, and a long time later I got a reply, but it did not say anything, really. Some people are simply impervious to these things. Yes, once a very nice combination occurred at the club, and it seems something like it occurred a few years later, in another club. Big deal. Even Harold Lommer, not someone to spurn the bizarre in chess, was not so impressed by this coincidence. He was a strange character, a nightclub owner of German descent in London, who later lived in Valencia. He was a composer and collector of endgame studies, and published two famous standard works on them. He was also a fanatic of tasks, and he composed the first AUW [Allumwandlung, or 'all promotions', i.e. a position in which promotions to all five pieces occur in different variations - SG] in a study. He seems to have been an extremely nice man. He sent me entire manuscripts about utterly obscure tasks, and also occupied himself with the eightfold promotion. There are eight pawns on the seventh rank, and if the problem is correct, it can only be solved if they are all promoted to the same piece, one after another, all eight of them. With rooks, Lommer managed that, I think Chéron did that too. It's a matter of taste, but that sort of thing does not appeal to me.'

– *Does it come too close to* Fairy Chess *or analysing endgames with four knights against queen?*

'Yes, but when I imagine Troitzky in his Siberian forest, surrounded by howling wolves, analysing night after night whether king plus four knights can always beat king plus queen (laughs exuberantly), that is great. That is what chess is all about, only you have to be a chess player to appreciate it. How can you explain to a non-chess player that within chess there is the little world of endgame studies within which you have the even tinier world of theoretical major minor endgames, within which there is a micro cosmos populated by utter madmen analysing four knights against queen? Or try to explain the significance of this Mr. Veitch, an Englishman who seems to have lived on one of the canals here in Amsterdam, but who was otherwise untraceable, and whose reason of existence in chess was the cooking of endgame studies? (bursting out in a loud laugh again).'

– *But Troitzky is certainly a man you admire.*

'He was one of the greatest artists chess has ever produced. He discovered a great many brilliant manoeuvres, most of them in rather natural positions. He was a pioneer, and he towered far above his contemporary Rinck. Rinck definitely lacked the artistic touch. There was deadly rivalry between them, that is, from Rinck's point of view. Lommer once wrote me a very amusing letter about how he was in Barcelona and wanted to pay Rinck a visit, but Rinck refused to see him because Lommer had published an endgame collection containing *one* more study of Troitzky's than of his. Rinck's son apologised for his father not wanting to see Lommer, and ended up taking him to the zoo.'

– *A high point in your career of curiosities are your articles about the Babson task and the bibliophilic little book on the same subject,* De man die de Babson task wilde maken *(The Man Who Wanted to Make the Babson Task), which opens with the telling sentence: 'Anyone not familiar with the story of Drumare knows nothing about chess.'*

'Yes, the greatest of all tasks is the Babson task, and the finding of it makes one of the most dramatic chess stories that can be told. No one in his right mind had ever thought it could really be made, Drumare spent half his life trying it, and suddenly this unknown Russian pops up and does it as if it never took him more than an hour.'

– *It does seem incredible when you compare those cluttered and artificial positions of Drumare's with that normal looking position of Yarosh.*

'Yes, incredible. And if this Drumare had been the only one occupying himself with it... That man clearly wasn't all that talented. But I have researched this intensively, and then one comes across eight or so names of really great composers who have spent time on it. People like Lommer, Chéron, Siers, Loshinsky, Pauly. When such great composers had given up, others could safely assume that it simply couldn't be done. Or so it seemed. I'm glad I never tried, I might have become the victim of my own perseverance.'

– *How did it affect you at the time, when you read that someone had succeeded in making the Babson task?*

'Well, shivers down my spine. It was like picking up the newspaper and reading, 'Purpose of Life Discovered', or something like that.'

– *Reading the history of the Babson task or, for example, the investigation into the Saavedra position, one cannot escape being gripped, not only by the technical beauty but also by the story. Have you, as a writer, never felt tempted to use these stories for literary purposes?*

'No, because the beauty is in the position. The Babson task and the whole epic around it, Drumare's tragedy, fascinate me, but I am not really tempted at all to turn this into a story, because what fascinates me is the position. Yarosh' solutions, and those dreadful positions by Drumare are the story. As a story teller, I can do things with cycling. In chess, all that matters is what the pieces can do on the board, whereas cycling is the description of it. Before TV, cycling would not even have existed had it not been written about; in chess there is always a concrete abstraction, a position or a game one can play over. So I write cycling stories, and I show chess positions.'

– *What are your future plans as regards publishing? Will there be a sequel to* Chess Curiosities*?*

'Yes, but I need a new English publisher. I was a bit unlucky with George Allen and Unwin. I got the impression they were not really interested in chess. I had to write ten letters to get one answer, and now I am looking for an English chess publisher with whom this ratio could be brought back to one to one. I would love to have a curiosities book out every three or four years, and for a less ridiculously high price than *Chess Curiosities.* I don't expect to make money from it. I have once calculated my hourly wages for *Chess Curiosities*, and it was something like one guilder and twenty three cents. But my dream is one tome of thousand pages entitled *All The Chess Curiosities.* That can wait until I am sixty.'

– *Despite its hefty price* Chess Curiosities *received a good deal of recognition. The readers of* Chess Notes *even awarded it the Book of the Year Prize. That must have pleased you a lot.*

'Yes, of course. Money-wise, that prize is very small; but it is a journal which is really only read by bibliophilic chess lovers, by experts, who judge all books appearing all over the world. I do not know how many readers it has but for such an international club to vote my book the best book of the year naturally gives me great satisfaction.'

– *What are the characteristics indispensable for a collector of chess curiosities?*

'A great love of chess, a sense of beauty, and the neurosis of completeness.'

– *Are there connections between your main passions, chess, writing and cycling?*

'I think it all comes from an initial love of numbers. Don't ask me where I got that from. I love lists with numbers. When I was little the fact that my parents had a typewriter was a great discovery, and in one of my books I describe how I started to type a list of all natural numbers, beginning with one. I got close to five thousand and I still have those sheets, they are the most harmonious and satisfying piece of writing I have ever done. What else is chess but lists of hieroglyphs? One of my earliest chess fantasies was that I was going to hectograph a 106 move game Bobotsov-Bogatirchuk I had found in the tournament book of the Amsterdam Olympiad 1954, and deliver it door to door in the neighbourhood. It would be something like: Chess Agency Tim Krabbé; this week presenting Bobotsov-Bogatirchuk. I never got around to it, but it's really what I'm doing now, isn't it?

'And with cycling, one reason to take up that was that if I did the same tour every day, and recorded my time, and seven intermediate times, I would eventually have created, just as in chess, new and beautiful lists with numbers.'

– *Looking back on twenty years of chess curiosities, what high points do you see?*

'A few things. The Babson task is unbeatable. And the coincidence Wojciechowski-Sanz. Another remarkable coincidence is one concerning Kurt Richter. Somewhere around 1910, a combination appeared in a magazine, which was very clearly a plagiarised version of a combination Schiffers had once missed against Chigorin. Now, this was plagiarised under the name of Kurt Richter. Only, it couldn't have been *the* Kurt Richter, as he was only five or ten years old at the time. Ten year olds have been known to murder, but not to plagiarise, so it must have been someone else. That he should have chosen a name which was later to become at most synonymous with combinations in chess, that's most extraordinary. And of course the things which were the beginning of my love of curiosities, like that nearly winning king's march of Spassky's against Polugaevsky, which later, when one has collected so many other things, turns out not to have been so terribly special after all. But it is still a milestone to me, like that endgame Janowski-Lasker, New York 1924. The kind of thing that gives you an afterglow for a day. But I still think that there is nothing to top the Babson task story.

'I am also very proud of having personally discovered the latest castling, in Bobotsov-Ivkov, on move 46. It is very rare to find something like that in a primary source, but I did pick this one right out of the tournament bulletin myself. Not immediately realizing how special it was, this was before my curiosity hunting had really started. I remember seeing 46.0-0, and thinking: 'Isn't that a bit late?'. And then it turned out to have been the latest ever.

'This has become a recurring dream which must be typical of me. In that dream, I am playing over a game, and I gradually become aware that White castles at move 57, and Black at move 80. And I think: 'Gee, that's a good one for my collection!' I have this dream at least once in every two months. It varies, of course. It may be that both players castle at move 79. In an old famous game! And I think: 'How is it possible I always overlooked this?' And at the same time there is the immense joy that such a game exists. Well, this dream has taken the place of an older recurring dream about soccer results of 12-11 and so.'

– *But again numbers.*

'Numbers, yes. So in a way you could say that, through the detour of chess, my love has returned to its source.'

Sadly, chess politics have never been far away during the New In Chess era. One of the nadirs was reached when Spanish GM and journalist Ricardo Calvo was declared persona non grata by FIDE, in retaliation for views he had expressed in a letter about the 1986 FIDE Presidential election. Needless to say, it was those well-known troublemakers at New In Chess who published the offending letter...

One bridge too far

Ricardo Calvo

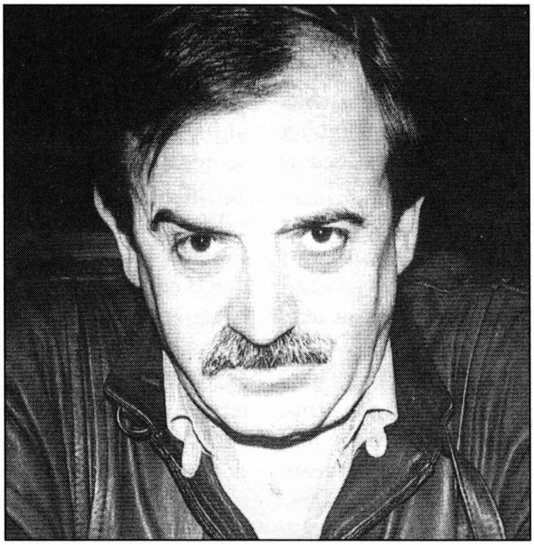
To summarize the fight between Lucena and Campomanes for the presidency of FIDE I cannot avoid remembering a well known film: In the second World War allied troops tried to conquer three consecutive bridges. Exactly the same as in this episode, the Kasparov forces were sufficient to conquer brilliantly the first bridge, which was the World Chess Championship. They did it however out of schedule, and the delay proved to be a decisive factor in the next two objectives. The second bridge was the Soviet Chess Federation. Here, the enemy forces have seen Kasparov approach, and even if they lost the Bridge (Sevastianov and some of his aides were substituted), they managed to build up some resistance, and several minor fortresses of this system could not be taken and kept the invaders under continuous fire. Krogius and the people in the Sports Committee have not yet (and possibly never will) surrender to Kasparov's offensive.

The third bridge (in the film the one at Arnhem) was FIDE and its captain Campomanes. Here the defenders have had a lot of time to prepare, hold a superior strategic position, their troops were well trained and equipped, with no logistical difficulties for fresh supplies. The result of this third battle is known: The bridge remained intact in the hands of the enemy, due to the decisive support at the critical moment of the battle by a division of tanks coming from the second bridge. Lucena capitulated, to avoid a massacre.

Since I have participated actively in this third battle, as a direct adviser of Lucena, I can give a personal view of what happened. I have no pretensions of objectivity. Historical reports have always been a puzzle of thousands and thousands of irregular pieces, somehow interrelated but to obtain the whole picture you need time, distance and above all luck.

The story began in London, in August, during the first part of the third Karpov-Kasparov clash. Under the (questionable) assumption that Kasparov represented the Truth, and (even more questionable) that Truth always triumphs, a worldwide campaign was quickly designed. The funds were provided by private means, and Lincoln Lucena started vaccinating himself against all tropical diseases and applying for visas to many countries in Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, Asia, Australasia and Oceania, carefully scheduled before his landing in Dubai on the 14th of November. Ray Keene was to visit the Caribbean part of the British Empire, the flying Dutchman Timman several obscure federations in Africa, and I was sent to Latin America. My only weapon was a letter by Garry Kasparov giving me full powers to arrange a tour of simuls, exhibitions and lectures to most Latin American countries. It opened me, as expected, even the iron doors of the most reluctant pro-Campomanes federations, and so I had at least the opportunity to talk.

I started at the 21st of September (that is, before the first bridge was taken) in an over-booked flight Madrid-Rio de Janeiro and the total picture of surprises, incidents, accidents and experiences is impossible to summarize. A few sentences for each country: in Brasil I had to perform a painful surgical correction. The FIDE delegate was intending to apply for the post of Deputy President, and I had to talk him out of linking his aspirations with our support, because two members of the same federation would be too much, even under Campomanes rules. Paraguay's chess federation has been for many, many years, in the conservative hands of a group of Stroessner supporters, with the brilliant results the world knows. The best player, Zenon Franco, has been practically expelled from the country. Several times chess events have been arranged by a rival chess group, but even if its leader was married to the daughter of President Stroessner, he was unable to obtain the approval of his father-in-law in order to represent Paraguayan chess in Dubai. The officials in charge, needless to say, had tickets paid by the Arabs and were enthusiast supporters of Campomanes.



GM Ricardo Calvo, who ruffled FIDE's feathers with his criticism of the 1986 Presidential Election.

Uruguay was a pleasant surprise, with a democratic federation in which chess players actively participate. Obviously, they were natural supporters of the Kasparov-Lucena flag. They were a helping hand even in Dubai. Argentina did not cry for us, but if so, she would have plenty of reasons. The chess federation is run by a small group of persons in the best 'mafia' style, and even the claiming chorus of voices from Najdorf, Quinteros, Larsen and a large number of others was helpless. An official, Giannotti, was already appointed arbiter at the Olympiad (he is not an international arbiter of course), and Noguues has been nominated after the elections in Dubai for the Executive Council of FIDE.

Before entering Pinochet's Chile I put Kasparov's letter well hidden in the bottom of my case, but it didn't help in my talks with the president of the chess federation. After a long and disgusting discussion, it became clear to me that when Nature put an ocean and a big chain of mountains between us two it was a wise decision to which I am extremely grateful.

The legitimate Bolivian chess federation was in the city of Cochabamba for the period 1985-1987, according to an official statement by the Ministry of Sports. But a pro-Campo group engineered a coup, and obtained at the end the tickets and a 'de facto' representation. The president in Cochabamba foresaw this, and gave me a proxy with full powers. It caused an open conflict in the General Assembly in Dubai, irrelevant to the result.

Peru, Ecuador and Colombia suffer from the same evils. There is a lot of possibilities for chess events, talented players, active circles. But internal fighting and official ineptitude paralyse everything. Sometimes it seemed to me that in the whole country there was only one single person favouring Campomanes, but in each case, this person was in charge of the delegation and with the tickets in his hands. Prestigious FIDE delegates were helpless for various reasons: In Peru, Aaron Goldenberg declined to come to Dubai, needless to say why. In Ecuador Paul Klein was very ill, and it took me a trip to the other earth hemisphere to learn with horror that the man in charge had spent in Guayaquil three days and three nights with Campomanes, the year before, a chess directive in Ecuador still keeps in his safe a written confession of his sins signed by this man, the one who was going to vote for Campomanes. Sometimes, in Dubai, I was tempted to use this, but in general I intended in this campaign to behave properly, though it was extremely difficult at certain moments. About Colombia, I prefer not to talk.

Venezuela had a new chess president, a delightful old woman called Adalgisa de Briceno. She was physically beaten during her campaign by her rival, a pro-Campomanes man. In Dubai, she still wore an orthopaedic collar around her neck, because of the vertebal injuries. Chess is not a pacific game anymore.

Panama has no official chess federation, but there is a man accepted as representative by FIDE. He runs a club for chess and backgammon and intends with a certain touch of desperation, to make it profitable. He was a Campo man. On the contrary, Costa Rica, where Lincoln and I met, fell completely in our arms. We jumped then to Guatemala, where the Juarez clan (four brothers in the Olympic team and a Juarez as president of the chess federation) was so interested in a simul with Kasparov that they agreed to vote for Lucena in principle. This was extremely important at this point, because the six Central American countries had decided to vote together, and we had therefore two out of three. We got also a very positive impression after our visit to Republica Dominicana and Haiti, so that when we arrived at Havana to meet Kiminez, a well-known pro-Campomanes man, we were able to make him understand that he could not underestimate our chances, and we enjoyed asking him the tricky question whether he was or was not in favour of Kasparov. In Mexico, a simul by Kasparov would give us the vote. Lucena and I separated here, and I went alone to Honduras where the talks were inconclusive. EI Salvador supported us because I promised that in case of victory Kasparov would give a simul, free of charge, to the victims of the recent earthquake. For the man in charge of the Federation of Nicaragua (his name is Hamlet Danilo) the question was to be or not to be on good terms with his neighbours, also in chess, so he would accept the majority opinion of the Central American group, at this point already tilted to us in spite of Campomanes' previous efforts.

This quick campaign (I was only two days in each country) convinced us that on the Latin American board we had at least a draw, so our chances of fighting the elections successfully became more and more real.

When Keene, Levy, Lucena and I met for the first time, we had first of all to overcome a shock: The Arabs had sent free tickets to almost seventy carefully selected countries. The excuse of helping poor people was untenable. For instance, Spain received free tickets, but Portugal did not.

We went on with the campaign, talking with the delegates, arranging meetings, writing statements or translating documents. By far, the most effective weapon was Kasparov himself. He met every day with a group of selected delegates, in an open discussion lasting till 2 or 3 a.m. He was terrific, brilliant, extremely convincing. I firmly believed that he alone could have won the election, regardless of the Soviet vote if he had time to talk continuously to the delegates.

But unfortunately he had to play as well, and prepare carefully the game with the Soviet team, which was very insecure from the very beginning. The talks exhausted him, and meanwhile, the Soviet chess federation, (the second bridge) had not yet supported his position openly. So his attempt to make an arrangement with Campomanes was understandable, even if it interrupted the campaign for several days.

The loss of a game against Seirawan aggravated the situation. At this moment the battle was still uncertain. Some twenty votes were undefined, including the Soviet one. Each side had more or less fifty votes, with a small number fluctuating from day to day, because the intention of vote is a fluid state of mind in most of the cases. So, it was clear that the Soviet vote would decide. This was day 3. The Soviet delegation announced officially its support for Campomanes only hours before the new president, Alexander Chikvaidze, landed in Dubai. From this moment on, a snowball of heroic voters who wanted to help the winner grew and grew, so that the day before the election no one dared, during a big dinner, to sit at the table where Lucena and I were seated. It was an elegant gesture from Mr. Littorin, president of the European Chess Union, to cross the big Saal and to invite us to join the European delegates.

The rest is known. I have tried to understand why. I have seen that many countries have so many problems that to speak about purity in the elections of a chess federation seems almost a joke. There is an atrocious civil war in many of these countries, and most Europeans simply do not realize how cruel this can be. There are also open veins in the economies of these regions, where a girl must become a prostitute from fourteen years on, or a boy must become a policeman or a soldier of the dictator if they want to survive. In these situations, chess delegates are delighted with a small piece of the big cake of money, or power, or travelling away from their unhappy surroundings. They are grateful for a free ticket, or a good meal, or oh my God, the possibility of a post in the FIDE, with a beautiful flag over an international table. I believe that this is the kind of people who have supported Campomanes.

But I have also seen, in remote towns, chess players meeting for a lecture, with shining eyes when they discover the second idea of a study by Liburkin. In many chess circles, the daily work of the enthusiastic teachers has impressed me, and one is touched when the parents come with a seven-year-old boy with an Indian face, dressed in his best shirt, to ask to play a game against the boy, because he is talented, and not many masters have visited the town. As an emanation of all these people, appear to me many Latin American delegates, clever, resourceful, trying to help Lucena and his campaign even if they must do it in a hidden manner. Because of these people, I believe that the battle is not over, and that the third bridge can be taken one day.

Over the New In Chess years, computers have changed chess beyond all recognition. Opening preparation, in particular, has been revolutionised by the use of laptop computers and databases. In 'the good old days', preparation was a much more haphazard affair – one looked through a few magazines, found something one liked, and played it. In 1988/3, the great Bent Larsen told a typical tale.

Too much preparation

Bent Larsen

Gligoric once said: 'All this preparation, and all this talk about theoretical novelties, it's all nonsense. You know your theory, and if the opponent makes a surprising move, you just start thinking and find the right answer!'

Maybe he changed his mind later. *Game of the Month* adds its load to all the material the young student thinks he has to digest.

Ftacnik said in an interview in this magazine: 'My problem is that I know the same as many others.'

Yes, and that is why these young masters prepare the evening before the game! They trust the opponent to play this 'common knowledge', so it is good to brush up or even find some new idea on move 17. With 40 moves in 120 minutes they like those long variations. So does the opponent.

Murray could not help it. He had to prepare. I had played 1.c4 against Short in Round 1, maybe the shocker would be 1.♘f3. He found something he liked in *Informator* 43, page 21, Game 6, Dizdarevic-P.Nikolic, Sarajevo 1987, with notes by the winner. The winner had the black pieces. Murray was ready for Round 3:

RE 15.1 – A09
Bent Larsen
Murray Chandler
Hastings 1987/88

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4!?

Very strong! Nobody has played this against me the last three decades, and I don't think White has any initiative in the continuation after 3.e3 ♘c6. Since my childhood I have tried to find something after 3.b4 f6, but the interesting variations are good for Black. So, I play quietly. A 'black' opening with a tempo extra. And how was it? Did not Kortchnoi beat Timman?

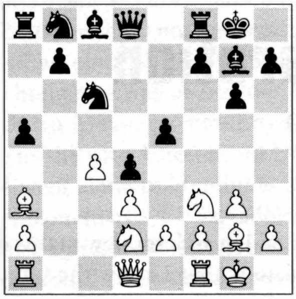
3.g3 g6

Not everybody likes the old Benoni with colours reversed: 3...♘c6 4.♗g2 e5.

4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.d3 e5 6.0-0 ♘e7 7.b4 0-0 8.♘bd2 a5?

In Nikolic' footsteps. In my opinion a positional mistake, which makes it easier for White to get play on the queenside. 8...c6 or 8...h6 must be better.

9.b5 c5 10.bxc6 ♘exc6 11.♗a3



Sound the trumpets! TN! Theoretical Novelty! Well, not quite. Nikolic mentions 11.♗a3 ♘b4 12.♗xb4 axb4 13.♕b3 ♕e7. It is difficult to understand why White should solve Black's problems with ♗xb4. Dizdarevic played 11.♖b1 and after ...♘a6 it was equal, according to Nikolic.

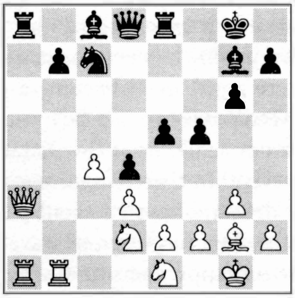
11...♘b4 12.♕b3! ♘8a6

The difference is 12...♕e7 13.♘e1! followed by ♘c2. Without any pawn sacrifice White is getting queenside pressure, like the Benko Gambit.

13.♗xb4 axb4

I do not know if ♘xb4 is better. The pressure along the b-file will cause difficulties for Black, and where is he to attack? It is one of these solid positions, where White's only weak point is e2!

14.a3 bxa3 15.♕xa3 ♖e8 16.♖fb1 f5 17.♘e1 ♘c7



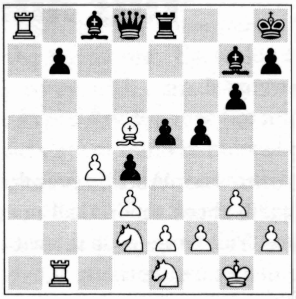
The queen sacrifice is tempting, also for psychological reasons. First of all, Chandler is an aggressive player and probably does not like to defend a difficult position. Secondly, the sacrifice appears to be a 'logical' continuation. It looks as if White is dictating the events.

But the sacrifice has to be improved! In the game continuation, it is very important that the black king has back rank problems.

18.♗d5+! ♔h8

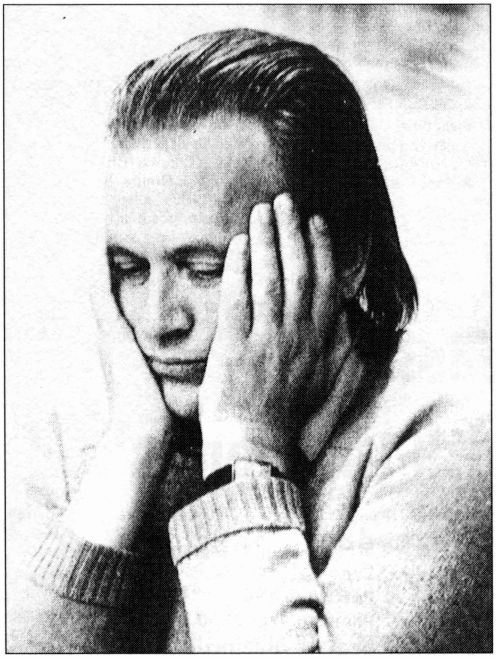
After 18...♘xd5 19.♕xa8 ♘c3 20.♖xb7! ♘xe2+ 21.♔f1 ♘c3 22.♖aa7 ♗xb7 23.♕xb7 ♕f6 24.c5 White is on top.

19.♕xa8 ♘xa8 20.♖xa8



20...♗h6

During the game I expected 20...♕e7 21.♗xb7! ♗d7 (21...♗xb7 22.♖xb7! is worse, and already



Bent Larsen: 'Murray could not help it, he had to prepare.'

here you see the importance of ♗d5) 22.♖xe8+ etc. In fact this variation almost made me abandon the queen sacrifice. I wanted to keep both rooks, to double on the seventh.

Anyway, the position favours White. He has rook, minor piece and a strong passed pawn for the queen, and the important thing, as already indicated, is Black's lack of active play.

Another possibility is 20...b6, but White just plays 21.♖b8.

21.♘df3 ♕e7 22.♗xb7 ♗d7 23.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 24.♗d5 ♕d6 25.♖b7

Partly a psychological move, reminding Black of the unhappy position of his king. 25.h4 was just as good.

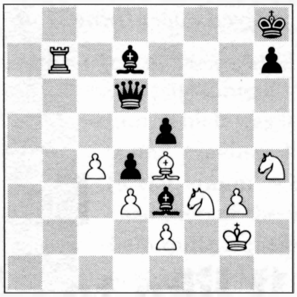
25...g5 26.h4! gxh4

After 26...g4 27.♘g5 ♗xg5 28.hxg5 a very funny position would arise: Black can do nothing, and White's knight is on its way to h4. For instance 28...h6 29.gxh6 ♕xh6 30.♖b8 ♕g6 31.♘g2 ♔g7 32.♘h4 ♕h5 33.♘xf5+, with an easy win.

27.♘xh4 ♗d7 28.♘ef3 f4

In a bad position it is sometimes difficult to find good moves. Against 28...♗c8 White plays 29.♖f7, and after 28...♗e6 29.♗xe6 ♕xe6 30.♖b5 30.♖b5 (or 30.♖b8+ ♔g7 31.♖b5) Black loses several pawns.

29.♗e4 fxg3 30.fxg3 ♗e3+ 31.♔g2



Thirty years ago I sometimes visited Willie's Place, right in the centre of Copenhagen. I was even such a respected customer that I had my own coffee cup, with the inscription The Grandmaster. Chess was played, but only on three boards. Willie liked chess, but chess players are bad customers and eat very few sandwiches. The rest of the clientele consisted of businessmen, budding actors and beautiful models. (Do not go and look for it, there is a Spanish restaurant now.)

Ole was a young businessman who liked chess, and when he heard me saying that two rooks could be stronger than a queen, he simply did not believe it. I showed him, in a couple of games. You have to be careful in the opening, it takes time to mobilize the rooks.

I do not know much about Ole's progress in chess. Last time I saw him he was living in Paris, and business was OK. It would be nice if he saw this diagram: rook, minor piece and pawn against the queen, and Black has absolutely no chances. White is threatening c5.

31...♗g4 32.♖xh7+

32.♗xh7 ♗h5 33.g4 was also very good. The game is over, but my opponent was in time-trouble and had no time to resign.

32...♔g8 33.♖b7 ♕a6 34.♘xe5 ♗e6 35.♖e7

There is no defence against 36.♖xe6.

35...♔f8 36.♘hg6+ ♔g8 37.♖xe6 ♕a2 38.♖e8+ ♔g7 39.♖e7+ ♔h6 40.♘g4+ ♔h5 41.♖e5+ ♗g5 42.♘f4+ ♔xg4 43.♗f3

Mate.

Boris Spassky is not only one of the greatest players of all time, he is also one of the game's truly great raconteurs. In New In Chess 1988/7, during the tournament at Belfort, he gave a wide-ranging interview, which covered everything from a famous dispute between Tolush and Kotov, to the effect of tennis on a chess player's psychological approach.

Boris Spassky: 'I like to play with the hands'

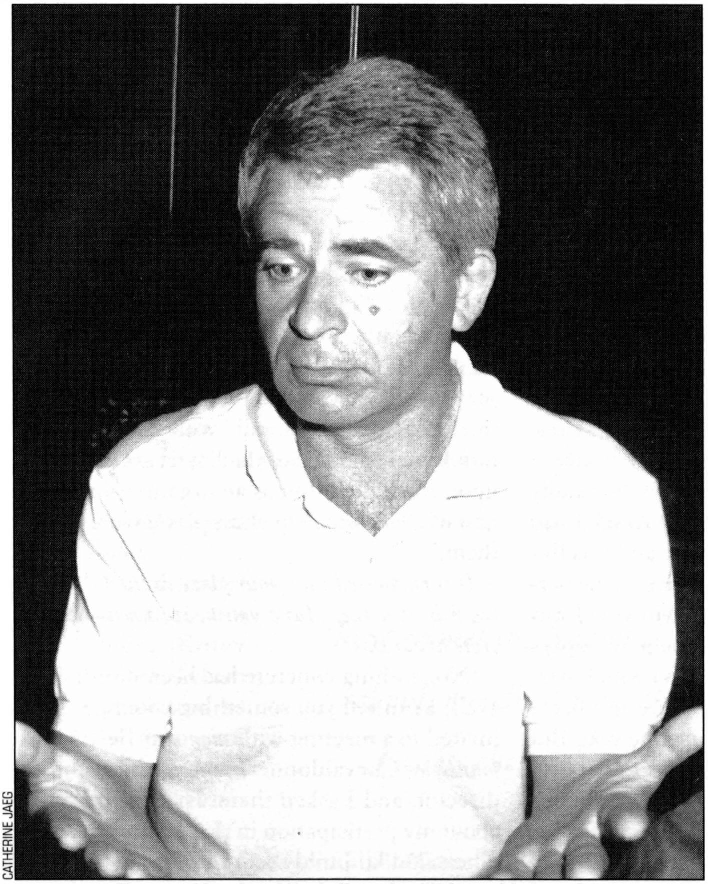
Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Eleven years ago, after many an abortive attempt, Boris Spassky obtained a temporary permit to leave the Soviet Union and to travel to France. Fed up with the harassment he had had to endure after his lost match against Robert Fischer, the ex-world champion never returned to his native soil. With his formidable talent and his enormous experience, Spassky can still be safely counted among the world's strongest grandmasters, but the joys of his tranquil and peaceful life in France have unmistakably reduced his ambitions. 'If I had to describe my life here in the West I would say that it is extremely reflective.' In Belfort Boris Spassky shared some of his reflections with New In Chess and talked with gusto and candour about life after the Match. 'Maybe people are right when they call me a lazy bear, a Russian bear. But if somebody wants to fight, I will fight. And I can still be successful.'

– *What have been the effects of living in France on your personal life and on your life as a chess player?*

'First of all I arrived in France as an ex-world champion. After my match against Bobby Fischer I encountered many problems in the Soviet Union, so when I came to France I immediately felt very free. Unfortunately I was not rich anymore. After the match I had been quite a rich person in the Soviet Union. I had received ninety-three thousand dollars, which fortunately I managed to spend during my last four years in the Soviet Union. So, when I came to France I had to work somehow and I became a professional grandmaster, or rather a typically western professional grandmaster. For me this was a crucial moment. I can tell you that I never tried to work very hard, because chess as a profession is not respected, either here or in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union chess is only used for propaganda purposes and in reality there are only three or four grandmasters who are paid really well. The rest have to fight very hard to attain a decent living standard.

'Perhaps the principal impression of my life in the West over the past eleven years is that it is very tranquil, very quiet. Nobody disturbs me. Because of my reputation after the match against Bobby Fischer I was sometimes invited to do simultaneous exhibitions and of course I am extremely grateful to my chess club in Solingen. It doesn't bring in a lot of money, but it is something, a basis, which gives me some sort of balance, an equilibrium in life. Of course, if



CATHERINE JAEG

'You need hands...' Boris Spassky, 10th world champion and probably no. 1 world champion raconteur.

this profession of chess player were paid better and respected more, I would work much harder. Maybe just for the money. Now I generally rely mostly on my talent. I don't make serious preparations before a game or study my opponent's games. I am very pragmatic in this respect, very practical. If I had stayed in the Soviet Union I would have had to work very hard, as the chess level is very high and the competition enormous, especially from the young generation. They have to prove themselves to be sent abroad to international tournaments.

'If I had to describe my life here in the West I would say that it is extremely reflective. My life has been very eventful. I have already been a rich person and very famous. Sometimes I have the impression that I have already been living for more than a hundred years. So many things have happened in my life, there have been so many changes and adventures, especially when I was living in the Soviet Union. Now, at fifty-one, I am very satisfied with my family life. I have my son who is a good boy to me, and I can pay some attention to him, which was impossible in my previous life in the Soviet Union, when I was champion of the world. So, I am quite satisfied. Now I have reached the stage between the middlegame and the endgame, if you compare it to a game of chess. But I don't have the feeling that I'm in the endgame already, I'm still in the middlegame.'

– *What concrete privileges did you lose after you had lost to Fischer?*

'Well, I can tell you just in general. After the match the Soviet Sports Committee cancelled my right or rather the facility to have first choice with respect to international competitions. I was invited to many, many tournaments then, and I really needed to play then, from a psychological point of view. If you are beaten you need a revenge and I was eager to have this revenge and I also had the strength, but they blocked me for nine months. Eventually it did me in. I sank into a depression which lasted maybe more than one year. As a result of this attitude towards me I started to fight against the Sports Committee. I started to fight against the political system. If a professional chess player is not sent abroad he can do nothing. I would have had to change my profession. I didn't become a dissident intentionally. Because I was a dissident, Kortchnoi wasn't. At that time Kortchnoi was a typical collaborator, an opportunist. The Sports Committee played a special game with him. (In a soothing tone) They forgave him something, some of his sins, some of his interviews. But my situation was very, very critical, as I got no tournaments.'

– *How did you find a chance to come to France?*

'I was extremely lucky. In Moscow I met my wife with whom I have been living for eleven years now, a very peaceful and good life. This is my third marriage. She was working at the *Mission Commerciale* of the *Ambassade de France a Moscou.* She is French. The way we got married was quite a story, a detective story. These were two years of fighting. I could write a novel about this, if someone was interested.'

– *Were there mainly bureaucratic problems?*

'No, these were not bureaucratic problems. We were both followed by the secret police. I was followed by the KGB, she was followed by their secret police as well as by the KGB. I had already been divorced at that time and was living alone, but they didn't like to give us the permission to get married. Once in Moscow I was even robbed. I think it was in the newspapers somewhere. Eventually I got a visa which permitted me to travel *à la retour,* there and back, as many times as I wanted during one year. But when I came to France I realized that I had reached a very peaceful place. So it was better to stay there. As a chess player I was getting older, of course, and as I told you I am quite lazy. I don't like to change my style of living. If there is some interesting event, like a match against a young promising player, then this will motivate me and give me energy. But now even this tournament, although it is nice to play here, can hardly motivate me. I am very peaceable, but if someone wants to fight, I will fight. And I can still be successful. Maybe people are right when they call me a lazy bear, a Russian bear. Maybe this is correct somehow, because I am still a strong player. Unfortunately there is no challenge for me in France. We don't have any good players at the moment. There are a few promising young players, but they are nothing special.'

– *I understand that the French Chess Federation would gladly involve you in the training of these young talents.*

'As long as I am still an active player myself I am not going to train other players, unless they can create some interesting financial conditions.'

– *Of late there have been some rather drastic changes in the French Chess Federation and many chess players have high hopes of the new president, Mr. Bertolo.*

'I don't know. I haven't seen any changes. The only changes I could think of are better financial conditions for the players and a good organisation, but at the moment the French Chess Federation provides neither. So, only *muchos palabras,* and nothing more. Sometimes I even get the impression that our previous president was better than his successor. The new leadership just wants to have control over all the chess players and doesn't want to give anything to them. I don't like this and I will resist it, as it reminds me too much of the Soviet system. I look upon the Federation as an organisation which first of all should help chess players, not exploit them.'

– *It is rumoured that your place in the Olympiad team is at stake. Have you heard anything concrete about this?*

'No, nothing concrete has been decided yet. Well, I can tell you something concrete. I was invited to a meeting with *monsieur* Bertolo and *monsieur* Chevaldonnet, who is the technical director, and I asked them what they thought about my participation in the Olympic team, in Thessaloniki. I told them that I wanted to play under the same conditions as I had done before, but they couldn't tell me anything about this. And it was they who invited me to this meeting, not me. I didn't understand this at all.'

Trainers

– *Chess in France would certainly benefit from an experienced national trainer. You have often stressed the importance of your own trainers, Zak, Bondarevsky and Tolush, for the development of your talent.*

'Oh, yes. I have very good recollections of all three of them. Zak is still alive. Maybe I will still have the chance to visit him in the Soviet Union. If I go there I would like to visit all my friends and especially the graves of those who have died. It is difficult to say how my trainers influenced me. I think Bondarevsky helped me a lot to become world champion. At that time I was so strong that I couldn't imagine how strong I actually was. I was a rough diamond and Bondarevsky polished it. Bondarevsky was also a very interesting man, one of the cleverest persons I have met in my life. But on the other hand he was also a terrible coward. I respected Tolush more. Tolush had an extremely rare quality. In Russia we call this *blagorodstwo,* something like 'nobility'.'

– Wasn't it Tolush who incited you to play more aggressively?

'No, I had already become more aggressive of my own accord. So, I was looking for him. We found each other and then we started to work together. In 1953 in Bucharest he reached his peak. At that time he was only forty-one years old. In 1957 he almost became champion of the Soviet Union, but lost against Tal in the last round.'

– There's this famous story about one of his games against Kotov.

'Yes, (broad smile) this story will go into my memoirs. Kotov wanted to ask Tolush for the point and so he visited him and said 'Sasha, I need this point'. And Kazimirovich (Tolush's patronymic – ed.) said very simply 'OK Sasha (as both of them were called Alexander – ed.), no problem, but... glory to you, money to me'. After that, of course, they couldn't find a solution and there was no agreement. But Tolush was furious and said 'In that case you will be mated in the district of squares f7 and g7'. So, they said goodbye and parted and during the game Kazimirovich sacrificed his knight on g7. There was applause in the hall and a nervous Kotov returned on the stage and asked 'For whom is this applause?' And Kazimirovich pointed his finger at him and said severely 'For you'. So, after this game they became friends for life.'

Bobby Fischer

– You once said that you became a professional at the age of ten.

'Or maybe nine. What I meant was that at the age of nine or ten my life was already absolutely determined. I became a professional subconsciously, without actually knowing it.'

– Your parents had been divorced by then. Was playing chess a way of creating your own world?

'I don't know. This is very private. You know that in the history of chess there have been several world champions who spent their childhood without their father. For example Botvinnik, Bobby Fischer and I myself. Well, I still had my father, but in actual fact he was absent.'

– Was this 'shared background' the reason for your sympathy for Fischer?

'My sympathy for Bobby Fischer stems from my childhood. In 1958 I met him for the first time when he came to Moscow together with his sister. What I liked in Bobby was that he was absolutely open and easily approachable. He liked to say openly what he was thinking. His approach to chess was also very honest and very pure. For the public, however, he wasn't a person you could easily get along with. The public needs some sort of social relation with a sportsman or an artist. So, on occasion Bobby was attacked by a lot of people, including chess players. Such as Botvinnik, who maligned him many times. His present situation is very tragic and he is living in really poor circumstances.'

'I never met the Soviet chess school, nor did I meet the Fascist chess school.'

– Do you think Botvinnik attacked him because he saw him as a threat to the Soviet chess school?

'I don't think the Soviet chess school exists. I never met the Soviet chess school, nor did I meet the Fascist chess school. If you start from such premises this would mean that Bobby Fischer was a leading representative of the Soviet chess school. This is nonsense, of course. It is just playing with words without understanding what they really mean. Chess is an international game and you could talk about national schools of chess, that I do believe, but not about ideological schools of chess. There exists a Jewish mentality in chess, a Russian mentality and a German mentality.'

– Do you really believe this?

'Yes, of course, but nobody likes to talk about this. Newspapers like certain stereotypes, like Soviet chess school. I can give you another example. The slogan of the French revolution was

Liberté, Egalité and *Fraternité*. But these ideas are completely contradictory. If there is *Liberté* there will not be any *Egalité*. But these are the stereotypes people like, and so there is a Soviet chess school and a Fascist chess school.'

– *Could you give an example of something in chess which is typically Russian?*

'Take for instance two Russian grandmasters, Alekhine and Chigorin. I don 't like to talk about modern examples. Both Alekhine and Chigorin have a lot of artistry in their styles, but sometimes they are not very fundamental. Now if you take on the other hand the best people of the Jewish chess school, Steinitz, even Botvinnik, Nimzowitsch and Réti, you will see that they were very scientific. Their approach to the problems was extremely fundamental. Of course there is one notable exception, that is Tal. Which just proves the general rule.'

Perestroika

– *You said that you got a permit to travel from the Soviet Union to France and back. Do you still have this permit?*

'No, not anymore. I still have my Soviet passport, but it has a special note to it. My permanent residence is abroad. If I want to visit the Soviet Union I will have to apply for a visa and specify the towns I intend to visit. I could also ask my relatives to send me an invitation. There is a special form for this which has to be sent to the consulate in Paris, after which it would be decided whether or not they would give me permission to travel. But this would take five or six months. That is a long story, so I don't want to ask them. Apart from that one of my principles is: never ask gangsters for anything. I don't like dealing with gangsters. If they need something, they can ask me.'

– *Why would they ask you to come?*

'I don't know. Maybe they want to have good relations with me, because I was champion of the world. But they know I am an anti-Bolshevik, and this country is becoming more and more Bolshevik.'

– *Don't you think that 'Perestroika' will bring about some fundamental changes?*

'No, I don't. This is impossible as long as the Mafia are ruling the country. Such changes can only occur if the body of the state is normal and based on democratic traditions. In the Soviet Union the basis is wrong, as the Mafia took power by killing millions of people. This country was raped by Bolshevism. All countries which are taken by Bolshevism are in a state of civil war. The people try to maintain their culture, but Bolshevism wants to destroy culture. The worst thing is that they want to smash the soul of a nation. But let's talk chess. I don't want to talk about politics.'

– *Well then, what do you think of the future of chess and the developments that are taking place at the moment?*

'Right now I am also very pessimistic about the prospects for the chess world (laughs). The general problem is to convince people that chess can be a professional sport. People have to be better informed about what it means to be a professional chess player. They should get a better impression of his daily activities and the problems he faces. In the future his work will be increasingly determined by the developments in the computer sciences. But despite these aids the world champion will always be someone with a real talent for chess. At the moment we have this great talent, Kasparov, and still another great talent, Karpov, both of whom are far superior to the rest. I think that Kasparov is a very good thing for chess. Maybe he is better than Karpov, but I doubt whether he can exploit his talent as fully as Karpov did. As champion of the world Karpov demonstrated a fantastic personality for ten years and won forty first prizes in the biggest tournaments. Of course Karpov was criticized, because he would travel like a king, with a bodyguard and things like that, but in the twenty-seven years that Lasker was champion he only took six first places in fifteen tournaments or so.

'Kasparov and Karpov have different natures. Karpov's strength is based on collecting small advantages. You know, in chess, too, he is a collector, like he is a stamp collector. This is a very fundamental approach. Kasparov's strongest side is his creativity. He needs the initiative, he needs some analysis. At this level this creativity takes much more energy than Karpov's approach based on his positional talent. Karpov's talent is more natural, Kasparov's more artificial. You cannot stand such tension for ten years. Another two years and he will be finished as world champion. Maybe three years. Of course I would not like to predict such things because it's an ungrateful business.'

– *One of the latest fads in chess is the introduction of the Active Chess cycle. What are your ideas about this Active Chess?*

'(Beaming with pleasure) Oh, I love Active Chess. Yes, I am going to participate with great pleasure. If the time-control would be fifteen minutes I would even be happier. Yes, between fifteen and thirty minutes is all right for me. But I don't know why it is called Active Chess. If there is Active Chess this implies there is Passive Chess, too. I don't like this suggestion. But I already told you that chess needs money and organisation. Maybe some sponsor will want to organize a thirty seconds tournament. I am not enthusiastic about the idea, but if some private business wants to do so...I only mean to say that the GMA should be more tolerant of such ideas as Active Chess or, who knows, a chess tournament on the moon.'

> *'Botvinnik played some training games underground at his dacha and invented this playing tempo.'*

– *The GMA mainly objects to the special master and grandmaster titles, because they might cause confusion.*

'Why couldn't one be Active champion of the world? Who doesn't want this?'

– *Kasparov for instance.*

'Yes, I can understand that. But you can make a one-year cycle. (Laughs and quasi solemnly pronounces) Active champion of the world 1988 or '89. Why not? Or Expert of Rapid Chess? But jokes aside, where do you think that the old forty moves in two-and-a-half hours rule comes from? Why two-and-a-half hours? That was an idea of Mr. Botvinnik, (starts mimicking Botvinnik and speaking slower), who was checking very carefully what would be the best time-control. Which time-control would guarantee the highest productivity. He played some training games underground in his dacha and invented this playing-tempo. And it was impossible to change this. But now the times have changed.'

Writing a Book

– *You have often suggested that you were writing a book on your games, but mostly you presented this in a jocular manner, a famous example being 'I am writing a book on my match against Fischer. At the moment I am working on the second game'.*

'I am still writing this book. I would like to publish this book after my death, because it contains certain memoirs, certain ideas. There is no sense in writing such a book for the money, because it is very poorly paid. Nobody is going to pay you decently for it. If you want to write a good quality book you need time. I have many recollections from my chess career, I met many interesting people, but I wouldn't like to write a book like, for example, Kasparov did (*Child of Change* – SG). This is not a book, I could only read two or three pages of it, this is garbage. As champion of the world I would pay at least one million dollars to get rid of such garbage. A shame! First of all, if you write a book as champion of the world, you should write it personally, without any journalist.'

– *But your book, how do you go about it? Do you have a manuscript which gets bigger and bigger?*

'No, I have a concept for my book and I have written a few chapters. Of course I will also include some analyses, but nothing serious. I don't like that. But I want to be very honest. If I didn't see something I would like to say 'Here I was blind, I didn't see this'. I don't like this Botvinnik formula (in a solemn voice). 'At this moment I had forgotten about something'. No, he didn't forget it, he didn't see it! Haha, I had forgotten.'

– *But then you can't blame only Botvinnik for this.*

'No, no, there are many others. Polu is always forgetting something, Karpov, too, even Kasparov. Alekhine was also forgetting a lot of things. But Fischer was more honest, Bobby was more honest, yes.'

– *I take it that your analyses won't be too long?*

'No, I would like to point out the crucial moments. I would prefer to do a few games, but to do them well and honestly.'

Antichess

– *You haven't published any analyses for many years.*

'No, no, nothing. I wrote two books. One about my loss to Karpov and the second book about my loss to Kortchnoi. I called this latter book 'The Dramatic Match'. I sent it to Schmaus, the publishing house and they didn't publish it (grins) and I am happy they didn't publish it. But they still have the manuscript. (Pauses for a while) In my next tournament I am going to meet the great representative of antichess, Mr.Kortchnoi (laughs).'

– *You are referring to his book* Antichess?

'He wrote a book about antichess and he showed his own antichess in the first World Cup tournament (laughing still more).'

– *How is your personal relation with Kortchnoi nowadays?*

'From my side I have a good relation, as for his side I don't care. That's his private business. I was not on speaking terms with him for six years after Belgrade, because I didn't like his approach to the problems that had arisen during the match. Two, three years later everybody agreed with me and said that they would have acted the same as I did then, but, oh well, let's forget about it.'

– *As is generally known you are a keen tennis player. Do you think that your interest in tennis has an influence on your psychological approach to chess?*

'Yes, absolutely. Like chess tennis is a game of balance, of equilibrium. Tennis gives you a very good balance of the body. It is fantastically refreshing for your mind if you can sweat once a day. You need a balance of mind and body. Paul Keres was a very good tennis player, but he didn't play very much, and so was Capablanca.'

– *Your tournament tactics, playing short draws and then suddenly energetically going for a win. reminds me of baseline tennis.*

'It's a bit like baseline tennis, yes, that is correct. Once Smyslov revealed to me one of his tournament secrets. He said that first of all he didn't have adjourned games, because they cost too much energy. Secondly he said that he used to play not with the head, but with the hands.'

– *Trusting his intuition.*

'Yes, because time-trouble doesn't allow for serious analysis during the game. If you have an idea, just play it. You must trust yourself. You know that in the game of chess there are two very important moments. The first moment is after the opening: plan. With this playing-tempo you can spend more than twenty minutes on your plan. Then the second moment: crisis. For this you have ten or fifteen minutes. But I like this idea. I love to play with the hands and draw, draw, draw (laughs heartily).'

In Belfort Spassky's tactics paid off. With one round to go he had garnered two fine wins and a string of mostly fightless draws. Then a silly loss to Karpov robbed him of unshared fourth place. Spassky certainly had not 'forgotten about something', this was sheer chess blindness, but nevertheless he quickly regained his jovial composure. A few hours later it became apparent how much this comedown had really affected him, when be suddenly realized that he had indeed 'forgotten about something'. Raising his voice he tried to make himself heard trough the VIP-room din: 'Gentlemen, what happened at Wimbledon today? Gentlemen, please, what happened at Wimbledon?' Nobody could tell him, but later he learned that the men's final had been postponed because of the rain.

Jan Hein Donner was never a serious threat to the world championship, but his dominating personality and exquisite writing skills have made him one of the most well-loved of all grandmasters, even (some would say 'especially'...) amongst those, like myself, who never actually met him. As one of the key figures in the establishment of Schaakbulletin, *the Dutch-language predecessor of New In Chess, he had a special connection with the magazine, and New In Chess co-editor-in-chief Jan Timman knew him as well as anyone. He wrote a fine obituary in New In Chess 1989/1.*

J.H. Donner: an obituary

Jan Timman

On November 27th 1988 J.H. Donner died in Amsterdam at the age of 61, exactly seven years and a day after his predecessor Max Euwe. The last five years of his life were spent in nursing homes. Paralysed and confined to a wheelchair he had great difficulty talking, but his mind was as sound as ever. He kept a close track of developments in the chess world and taught himself to type with one finger. In fact he had always been a writer, but it was only in this last period that his short pieces were recognized as literature. In 1987 he was awarded the Henriëtte Roland Holst Prize, a prestigious literary prize in the Netherlands. I will come back to Donner as a writer later; for he was of course a chess player first and foremost.

Donner was the first player in Holland to boast that he was a professional chess player. He learnt to play the game at a relatively late age (when he was fourteen), which is why he did not really break through until he was 22, when he won the 1950 Hoogovens Tournament, a full point ahead of Euwe and Rossolimo. Strangely enough, however, this was not a definite breakthrough. It took another four years for Donner to become Dutch champion, a feat which he repeated in 1957 and 1958. 1958 was also the year in which he was awarded the grandmaster title, quite a significant event in those days when titles were less easy to come by. Yet, at thirty years of age Donner still had not scaled the heights of his own talent. His heyday began in 1963, when he scored a runaway victory in the 25th Hoogovens Tournament, a result he always regarded as his greatest achievement. In 1965 he had made it to the world chess elite. During the European Championship in Hamburg he scored the best result on first board, while shortly afterwards he won the IBM Tournament. The best proof of the high regard in which he was held in the international chess arena must be the invitation he received for the second Piatigorsky tournament in Santa Monica in 1966. At the start of this event involving the ten strongest players in the world Donner played solidly; but halfway through things began to go wrong for him. A year later he claimed victory in a tournament in Venice, ahead of reigning world champion Petrosian. Donner's style was not dissimilar to that of Euwe. He had an unshakeable faith in the strength of the bishop pair. In other respects too, his game was, at its best, a model of consistency: aiming for a strong centre, a good sense of how to use the initiative, and especially an excellent endgame technique. His knowledge of opening theory was his weakest point really, although it must be said that he mastered some systems very well, in a way that no one else did. But I have often seen him labouring after an unsuccessful opening, a pawn down in a miserable position, smoking one cigarette after the other, hanging on with a supreme effort of willpower, making it to the endgame, still a pawn down, and relying on his strong technical skills to save the draw.

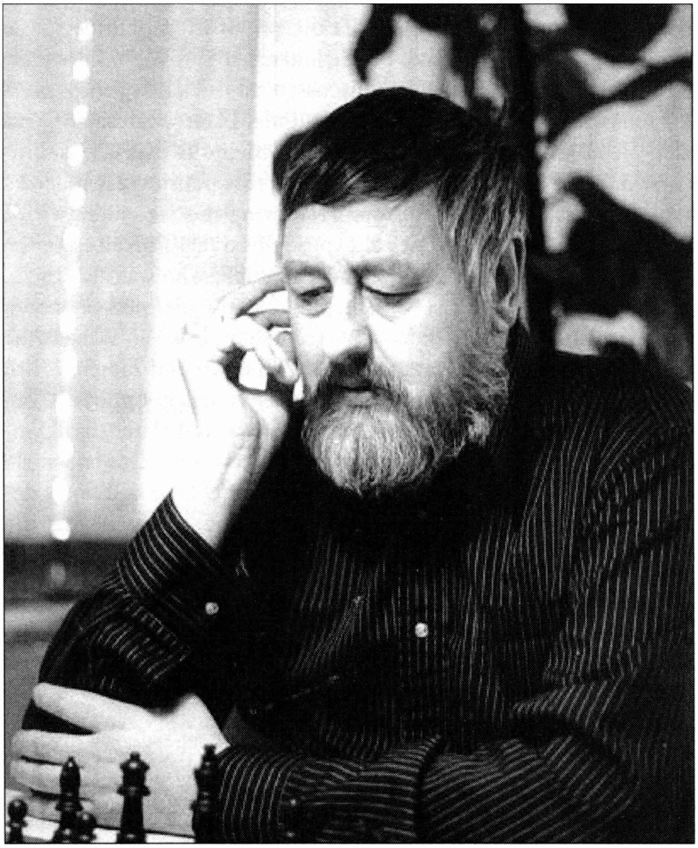
He did not believe in opening preparation, and rather neglected to look after his physical form, but Donner's fighting spirit and willpower still made him a good professional. That he sometimes lost against weak players was undoubtedly due to a lack of motivation, and of course because he underestimated his opponents. As far as I am concerned his best ever result was in Oegstgeest in 1970, where he finished second in a twelve-round four-player event, behind Spassky but ahead of Botvinnik and Larsen. The result that had eluded him in Santa Monica became reality in Oegstgeest; he held his own against the world's absolute best. He lost once to Spassky, defeated Larsen once and drew all the other games; draws which he did not have to pull out of the fire after tough and laborious defending. On the contrary, in most of the games he put his illustrious opponents under pressure from the start, probably only failing to win more games because of the enormous respect he held for his opponents. After Oegstgeest Donner did not attain the same heights again. In 1971 he shared the Dutch championship with Ree. A further ten years on he performed possibly even better when he was involved in a neck-and-neck championship race with me, in which I barely pipped him at the post. In 1974 he scored a strong second place in the Hoogovens Tournament, but his game was no longer of world class. Nevertheless he played several impressive games during those years, strategic and tactical masterpieces. He played his last tournament in 1982.

In 1987 chess writers Krabbé and Pam published *The King*, a collection of 'chess pieces' by Donner covering 33 years. I am certainly not the only person in Holland who considers this collection to be the most beautiful chess book ever to see the light of day. It contains tournament reports from Cuba to Palma de Mallorca, striking descriptions of chess players; a chess player's soul is bared for the readers of a women's weekly; it discourses about women's chess and women in general; old Dutch chess masters are sublimely but ruthlessly taken to pieces, and finally it also contains serious endgame studies. Donner had a grandiloquent style of writing, which really came into its own when he went out of his way to insult people. No one was such a master at hurling abuse as he. Reading *The King* it struck me that halfway through the sixties his pieces suddenly improved; the same period in which he reached the highest heights of chess. He described the events around him with a firmer hand; he brought a sense of irony to his writing, and his interest in politics and literature asserted itself more clearly. But Donner had not only written about chess matters before his paralysis. Some of his books are about the writer Harry Mulisch, and there is also a collection of his newspaper columns on the market. Indeed there is still enough unpublished non-chess material of his to make another nice collection.

After his stroke he could no longer write his articles, and his style changed drastically. The rhetoric disappeared, his humour became more wry, his sentences shorter. His style began to resemble that of Borges in his later days, a writer for whom he had boundless admiration.

The thought of these two great minds, however dissimilar, moves me. Borges – blind, with his hollow walking-stick from some Chinatown somewhere in the world, cranky and voluble during visits, looked after by his housekeeper on the top floor of a building on Maipu, dictating his short stories; Donner – paralysed, confined to a wheelchair, laboriously talking to his visitors, surrounded by nurses in *Vreugdehof* in Buitenveldert, typing his pieces with one finger. For three years, from Donner's stroke in 1983 until Borges's death in 1986, this must have been the daily pattern on two distant continents.

I have painted a picture of Donner as a chess player and a writer, but it is by no means a complete picture, as anyone who knew him would agree. Donner was a unique and fascinating personality, from whom I learned more about life than about chess. Words, and especially facts, can hardly do justice to this overwhelming, but at the same time capricious man. His political engagement shows in some of his actions. In 1966 he refused to represent Hol-



Jan Hein Donner, 'a figure one would least expect to find at a chess tournament'.

tention. He was a figure one would least expect to encounter at a chess tournament. Much more likely one could see him as presiding judge of a court, or delivering a philosophy lecture, or in Parliament, depending on the garment he would be wearing. In this tournament he chose an informal open shirt...'

It is striking that Piatigorsky saw Donner first of all as a judge. Perhaps he knew that Donner came from a family of judges; but he cannot possibly have known that Donner would marry a judge, Marianne Couturier, later. And as to that 'informal open shirt' – I doubt whether that would have satisfied FIDE's present 'dress code'. (Unfortunately Donner was Dutch representative to a FIDE congress only once, in 1982. I would have liked to see him in action during the discussion on the question of whether chess players should be allowed to smoke, or how they should dress.)

land because of the way the police were treating Provos (his first wife, Irene van de Wetering, was a prominent Provo). A year later he declared on television that he was going to donate the golden trophy he had won in Venice to the Vietcong so that they could buy machine guns. It was an impulsive gesture. Just before he came on, an item with a few young people talking about Vietnam had been cancelled. The donation was a powerless gesture really, which cost him his own livelihood.

The then rightwing *Elsevier* magazine fired him on the spot. It became even more powerless when the people in Venice thought better of sending the trophy to Holland.

For those younger people who have never seen Donner it may be appropriate to quote Gregor Piatigorsky in his introduction to the tournament book of the second Piatigorsky tournament.

'...There was something in Mr Donner's towering appearance that attracted irresistible at-

Finally, I would like to share some personal memories of Donner with you. I got to know Donner better in the artists' club *De Kring*, where we spent evenings and nights talking and analysing, sometimes with others. But he was always in his best form during the Olympiads. Travelling with Donner was always a very special experience for his teammates. Once at Schiphol Airport I was next in line to him at the security check. 'Have you got any weapons with you?' the ground stewardess asked. 'Yes, a formidable brain', he answered, leaving a stunned pair of stewardesses behind. Somehow they could not see the joke, just like the nurses in his nursing home could not really appreciate his mordant humour.

The first Olympiad we played together was in Skopje in 1972. One afternoon I sat in the hotel lobby reading *The Brothers Karamazov*, when he came in. 'What are you reading there?' he asked hurriedly. When I showed him the book he was really enthusiastic. 'That's the best book that has ever been written,' he said. 'Make sure you read it again every two years.' On the final evening he returned to the book. The drinks were courtesy of the federation, the table was full of wine bottles and the team were drinking to their hearts' content. Donner was in great form. His delivery was somewhat incantatory, the timbre of his voice changed with his arguments and the anecdotes he was recounting, and from time to time he closed his eyes to give more to his words. I remember only one high point from his account of Dostoyevsky's novel. 'Euwe is the Smerdiakov of the brothers Karamazov,' he declared loudly. We, I think, were supposed to symbolize the other brothers, but I do not remember this too clearly, since the evening deteriorated into a drinking bout.

Two years later we were in Nice. One evening the two of us went to a café. The barmaid was a very pretty girl. Donner was explaining to her that he was my father, which was all the evening provided in the way of extraordinary events. How different was the story he told our teammates during dinner the next day! Donner was a master of tall tales with an extremely slender base in truth. In his version the two of us had visited a brothel, where he had told them that I was his son who had never before slept with a woman. After which the prostitutes were supposed to have fought a pitched battle about who was going to take care of me. It goes without saying that I did not feel called upon at all to contradict this version of events.

On the way to Haifa in 1976 we had to stay the night in Herzliya. The hotel did not have enough empty rooms, so they had to be shared. Donner had been paired off with Ree, but he fought the idea tooth and nail. He declared that on awakening one's field of vision should be clear. In the end he seemed to have accepted his fate. But while unpacking his bags in the hotel room he changed his mind and said: 'I'm sorry, Hans, there's nothing personal about this but I'm going to sleep in the lobby.' Early-rising American tourists looked with amazement at the big man sleeping in an armchair downstairs. In Haifa the two of us were interviewed for radio by the journalist Van Weezel. 'Is politics a much discussed subject among chess players here?' he asked me. I started to say no, but Donner interrupted me, took over the microphone and explained that politics was indeed a frequent topic, following this statement with a very critical exposé of Israel. This despite the fact that he and Pachman, who was also there, were about the only people inclined to broach the subject. 'A great fellow, this Van Weezel,' he said later. Donner had discussed Zionism with him, to which he was violently opposed. Van Weezel defended it. It was only later that Donner remembered a fiercely anti-Zionist article by Van Weezel. Someone who could hotly defend an opposite viewpoint simply for the sake of argument was a fellow after his own heart, just as he appreciated the people he had insulted when they returned the insults.

One of my most moving memories of Donner dates from 1977. After the championship tournament in Leeuwarden we were sitting at the bar when someone whom I regarded as my best friend in those days came in. 'Who is that?' said Donner. 'My best friend,' I replied. 'But Jan,' he said, 'I thought I was.'

Donner did not form many close friendships, possibly because it was not in his nature to listen to other people. Six months before his stroke, in January 1983, it happened that we lived in close proximity in Amsterdam South. At least three times a week he dropped in, unannounced, for a cup of coffee, staying the whole morning, sometimes well into the afternoon. On those occasions we did not even talk much about chess. One morning he had something disturbing to tell me. The day before he had attended a meeting of some of the top Dutch chess players - I myself had not been there - at which the future of the Dutch national championship was discussed. He had asked why the tournament could not be held closer to home for a change, instead of in far-away Friesland. This statement was received with howls of derision as the second part of the previous year's championship had been held in Hilversum, close to Amsterdam, and Donner had played in it. But he had no recollection of this at all; there was a gap in his memory. Did I not have some information about this tournament to refresh his memory? I looked up a magazine with a results table, which he quietly studied for some time.

In late August 1983 Donner was hit by his stroke. He was totally paralysed but his phenomenal strength of mind saved him from mental collapse. 'The gods have hurled a piece of marble at your head, but they failed to bring you to your knees', Mulisch said at the presentation of *The King* in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1987. Personally I could scarcely accept the fact of his paralysis. I frequently dreamed about him, and in my dreams he was always completely his old self again – Hans Ree told me he had the same dreams. During the World Cup Tournament in Reykjavik I dreamed that he had died. It was such a vivid dream that I was quite shaken the next day and lost horribly to Hjartarson. I dismissed the bleak feelings from my mind, for Iceland was a country of sulphur and ice, where symbols of death were easy to find. But a month later I received word of his death, which is even harder to accept than his paralysis.

Another of the big changes which the New In Chess years have witnessed is the growth in strength of women's chess. A large part of the credit, though by no means all of it, goes to the remarkable Polgar sisters. Whilst Judit became the first woman in the world top 10, and Susan became women's world champion, the third sister Sofia saw her chess career rather overshadowed by her two siblings. Except that is, for one very special couple of weeks in Rome, in 1989, when she put up one of the greatest tournament performances ever (2817!) by a female player. Her elder sister Susan (still Zsuzsa at the time) reported on yet another Polgar feat.

Sofia Polgar: three is company!

Zsuzsa Polgar

In Rome the Italian chess magazine *Torre & Cavallo* organized a strong open tournament entitled the 'Regione Lazio' for the first time. The event was held from February 10 to 19 and the 66-player field included five IGMs, one WGM and six IMs plus a fair number of other strong players. An outline of Sofia's achievement follows.

The first two rounds saw no real surprises. Sofia played two unrated opponents, Rabczewski from Poland and Cardinal from Italy, winning both games. In the third round she was paired against the Soviet grandmaster Palatnik. As Black he played his usual Alekhine defence and reached a positionally worse middlegame. After mistakes on both sides White got a winning adjourned position. Her fourth round game against Italian IM D'Amore resulted in a very interesting endgame and a win after 61 moves. In round five Sofia quite convincingly beat grandmaster Alex Chernin and in round six she scored another point against grandmaster Suba in a Sicilian game. Round seven featured another Sicilian, Sofia being Black this time, when Mrdja was defeated in a double-edged game. In the penultimate round Sofia found herself in a dubious position against Soviet grandmaster Razuvaev, but she fought back and after 83 moves won again. A last round draw against Sergey Dolmatov secured the tournament victory two points ahead of the field! She overstepped the men's IM-norm by 3½ (!!) points and the GM-norm by 1½ point(!).

Sofia's performance is definitely unique in the history of chess and certainly the best by any fourteen-year-old or woman chess player. In fact it will not be easy to find a better performance by any chess player in an open tournament.

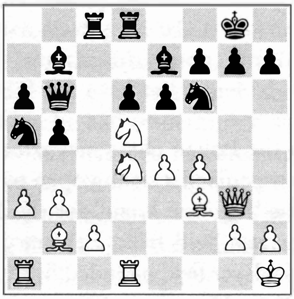
FRITS AGTERDENBOS

The 'forgotten' Polgar, middle sister Sofia. Nowadays, she is married with a family, and lives in Canada.

NOTES BY
Sofia Polgar

S1 24.1.6
Sofia Polgar
Alexander Chernin
Rome 1989 (5)

1.e4 c5
A surprise. I had been preparing against the French and the Pirc defence which he usually plays.
2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♗e2 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.f4 d6 10.♔h1 a6 11.♕e1 ♘a5 A rare move. More common is 11...♘xd4 12.♗xd4 b5 or 11...♗d7 followed by 12...♘d4 13.♗xd4 ♗c6. **12.♕g3** Better is 12.♖d1 b5 13.♗f3 ♗b7 14.e5 ♘e8 15.♕g3 ♘c4 16.♗c1 with a strong attack for White, Lalev-Kirov, Bulgaria 1981. **12...♘c4 13.♗c1 b5 14.a3 ♕b6 15.♖d1 ♗b7?** Black should continue playing actively. During the game I was afraid of 15...e5 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.♗h6? ♘h5 18.♗xh5 ♕xh6 and Black is winning. Instead of 16.fxe5 White has to play 16.♗xc4 bxc4 (16...exd4 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♗xd5 and White is better) 17.fxe5 dxe5 18.♕xe5 ♖e8 19.♕g3 ♗d6 and Black has enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn. **16.b3 ♘a5 17.♗f3 ♖ac8 18.♗b2** White is clearly better. Black underestimated the strength of the bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal. **18...♖fd8?** A blunder although it is difficult to suggest a good move for Black instead. True, there are three knights in the way, so I had to do something about this...
19.♘d5!



19...♘xd5
If 19...exd5 20.♘f5 wins or 19...♗xd5 20.exd5 is hopeless as well.
20.♘xe6! g6 21.♘xd8 ♕xd8 22.exd5 ♖xc2 23.♖ab1 ♗h4 23...♘xb3 would be a blunder because of 24.♗e4. **24.♕h3 ♗c8 25.♗g4 ♗xg4** Or 25...f5 26.♗f3 ♘xb3 27.g3 ♗e7 28.♕f1 ♘d2?

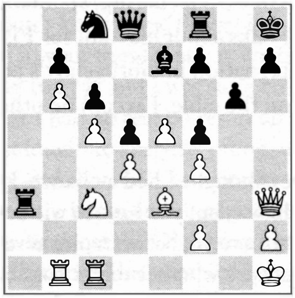
29.♕d3. **26.♕xg4 ♘xb3 27.g3?!** A positional mistake weakening White's kingside. 27.f5 was better. **27...♗e7 28.f5 a5?** I was surprised by this move but I think it is very bad. After 28... ♕d7 Black has good counterchances. **29.fxg6 hxg6 30.♕h3** I think Chernin probably overlooked that after 30...♗f6 31.♗xf6 ♕xf6 32.♖xb3 the rook is defending the f3 square. **30...♖xb2 31. ♖xb2 a4 32.♖f2 ♘c5 33.♖df1 f5 34.g4 ♘e4 35. ♖g2** Black resigned.

NOTES BY

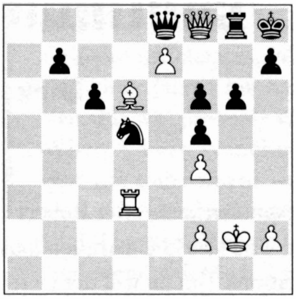
Sofia Polgar

AL 16.13
Sofia Polgar
Semon Palatnik
Rome 1989 (3)

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2 e6 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.c4 ♘b6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗e3 More common is the same line with the moves 9.h3 ♗h5 included. **9...d5** The other possibilities are 9...♘c6 10.exd6 cxd6 11.d5! exd5 12.♘xd5 with a slight advantage for White or 9...a5 10.b3 ♘a6 11.♕d2 which is also slightly better for White. **10.c5 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♘c8 12.f4 ♘c6 13.♖b1 ♗h4** 13...♗xc5? 14.dxc5 d4 15.♘e4 dxe3 16.fxe3 ♕xd1 17.♖fxd1 leads to a clear advantage for White, Abramovic-Alburt, New York Open 1988. **14.♔h1 ♘8e7 15.♗d3 g6** 15...♘f5 loses a pawn after 16.♗xf5 exf5 17.♕f3 ♘e7 18.♕h3. **16.♕g4 ♘f5 17.♗xf5 exf5 18.♕f3 ♘e7 19.♕h3 ♘c8 20.♖g1 ♔h8 21.b4 a6 22.a4 c6 23.b5** Too early. It was better to prepare b4-b5 with 23. ♖b3, after which Black has no counterplay. **23... axb5 24.axb5 ♖a3 25.♖gc1** 25.♘e2?? ♗xf2 wins. **25...♗e7 26.b6?**



Better is 26.♖a1 and if 26...♖b3 only then 27. b6. And if Black continues the same way as in the game the rook on the a-file gains great importance. **26...♗xc5! 27.dxc5 d4 28.♖d1 ♖xc3 29.♕h6 ♖xc5 ♗xd4 ♖d5** When I played 26.b6 I had planned to play 31.♖b3 but unfortunately I overlooked Black's defence 31...♖g8 32.♖h3 ♖g7. **31.♔g2** A strange prophylactic move; if 31...c5 32.♗a1 with the very strong threat e5-e6. **31...♘e7 32.♗c5! ♖e8 33.♖dc1** If 33.♗d6 then 33...♘g8 34.♕h3 ♖xd1 35.♖xd1 ♕xb6 wins another pawn. **33...♖d3 34.♗d6 ♘c8?** Black was thinking for about twenty minutes on this move, which I did not quite understand. I was thinking of 34...♘g8 35.♕g5 ♕d7 and I doubt whether White has enough compensation for the pawn. **35.♖d1 ♖xd1 36.♖xd1 ♖g8** After 36...♘xb6 37.e6! f6 38.♗f8 wins. **37.♖d3 ♘xb6?** The losing move. Black had to play 37...♘xd6 38.♖xd6 with a complicated position. **38.e6! f6 39.e7 ♕e8 40.♕f8! ♘d5**



After 40...♘d7, 41.♕xe8 ♖xe8 42.♗a3 is winning. **41.♖xd5!** Transposing to a technically winning endgame.

41...♖xf8

41...cxd5 42.♕xf6+ ♖g7 43.♕f8+.

42.exf8♕+♕+ ♕xf8 43.♗xf8 cxd5 44.♔f3 ♔g8 45.♗b4 g5 46.♔e3

This was the sealed move. Luckily I had my two sisters on the spot so I could go to sleep quietly... So the next morning the following happened:

46...♔f7 47.♔d4 ♔g6

After 47...♔e6, 48.♗d2 h6 49.♔c5 wins.

48.♗e7! h6

48...gxf4 49.f3 ♔g5 50.♔xd5 ♔h4 51.♗d6 ♔h3 52.♗xf4 ♔g2 53.♔e6 ♔xf3 54.♔xf5 b5 55.h4! b4 56.h5 b3 57.♗c1, and White is winning.

49.♔xd5 ♔h5 50.♗xf6 ♔g4 51.fxg5 hxg5 52.♔e5 b5 53.♗e7

Black resigned.

Garry Kasparov has been by far the dominant personality of the New In Chess years and although he has given us so much wonderful material over the years, he has also given us a few problems with the present book. If we included even a tenth of his tournament victories and outspoken interviews, we would not have many pages left for anything else! Consequently, we have been forced to 'ration' him quite severely, and we are conscious that he is objectively somewhat under-represented in this anthology. One interview we could not leave out, however, was that in 1989/7, which marked a real milestone in his career – his breaking of Fischer's all-time high Elo rating.

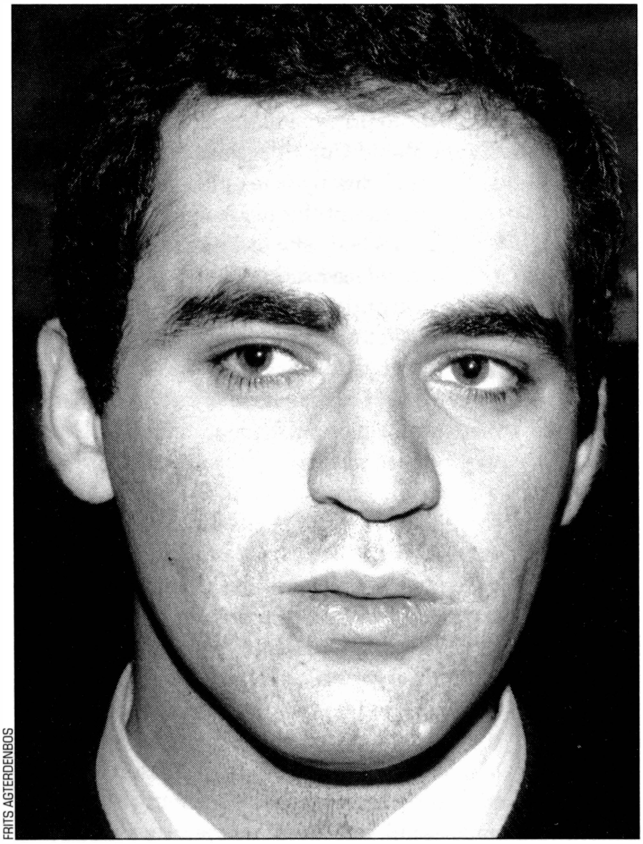
Garry Kasparov: 'I guess that I am continuing Fischer's fight'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

2793! Seventeen years after Robert Fischer reached dreamlike heights Garry Kasparov crushes through. The World Champion looks immensely satisfied and with a broad smile he accepts all congratulations. But he will not be tempted to easy boasts. The question if he is now the strongest player in the history of chess is evaded in a way that befits a true champion. 'The only way to prove your superiority over another player is to sit opposite him and to play. If I didn't actually beat Fischer or any other player I can't say that I am better.' Modest words of wisdom, but after Kasparov's World Cup victory, his astounding 12 out of 14 in Tilburg and his formidable new record Elo, his fans can be sure that they hold very strong trumps to claim that he is now the greatest ever. At this new peak in his career Garry Kasparov granted me the 'lengthy interview' I had asked for one year earlier. In two sessions he talked at length about his achievements and his ambitions. Rousing the reader's interest with adjectives like frank, daring, spontaneous or outspoken, would be completely superfluous. Whether he talks about his hunt for Fischer's record, his fight against FIDE or his severe criticism of the stagnation in Gorbachov's politics, for Garry Kasparov there is only one way. 'I play with all cards on the table. I accept no other game.'

– *By breaking Fischer's legendary Elo record you have achieved what many people thought was your biggest dream. Was it your biggest dream?*

'The first time I thought about it was in Brussels after the Ohra tournament, where I gained ten points and my Elo became 2755. We were discussing it with Ray Keene and probably Leontxo Garcia and they thought I had a chance. I said, 'Yes, there is a chance, but you have to win several tournaments with a result between plus seven and plus ten. I'm not sure whether this is possible. Another question is: 'Am I going to dedicate my life to this attempt?' I thought it was extremely difficult. Ray even thought about announcing some kind of



FRITS AGTERDENBOS

The sky's the limit – Kasparov, on his way over 2800.

bet, you know, one million pounds whether Kasparov will break 2800 or not. Right now I think nobody will give a penny for this bet (laughs). My next chance was after the Amsterdam Option Exchange tournament where I reached a really nice score and my Elo became something like 2765. Then in Belfort I could have broken the record, by beating Karpov or by not losing against Karpov. But it was not my intention to beat Fischer's record. I don't know why. Probably it should be deep down in your mind that you are fighting the record. I got to 2775 and I was stopped and then I realized that I had no real power to do it. In Reykjavik I just fought to keep my rating, which I did fortunately and then in Thessaloniki something very interesting happened. I signed this petition (to exclude results at the Olympiad from the Elo-list – ed.), because I'm completely against calculating team competitions, but funnily enough FIDE only made a decision after six rounds. I had played five games by then and had four out of five. It was very unfair that they were looking at my result. After five games everybody realized that my result would be very high. My final result in Thessaloniki would have brought me to 2788. And after Thessaloniki I felt that there was a chance. It's not so unlikely, let's try. The time before Barcelona was very bad for me. I couldn't prepare properly, but still I managed to win the tournament and save my Elo. And after Barcelona I told journalists that in Skelleftea, Tilburg or Belgrade I would beat Fischer's record. Actually I thought that it would be in Skelleftea. It wasn't but the intention was already there, very deep down in my mind.

'I started to play in Tilburg and after four rounds I was optimistic about my chances. When I beat Ivanchuk (slaps his hand) I felt that this was probably my chance. When I beat Ivanchuk I knew that the tournament was already won, so what about increasing my Elo? The critical game for me was Agdestein with black. I said to myself that if I beat Agdestein I must continue to fight for Fischer's record. But it wasn't because of me, because of the high quality of my games, but because of the opponents. They were scared. When you sense that they have this feeling it's much easier to play. They feel your superiority, this pressure and they are scared.

'The game against Sax was terrible. I made two mistakes. Of course f5 should be played automatically. This game showed me that I was very tired. Fortunately that evening I went to see the new James Bond movie (*License to Kill* – ed.) and I relaxed a bit. And then I beat Kortchnoi easily, but this I knew beforehand. In my second game against Ivanchuk I made another mistake. I think this was brought about by this game against Sax. After this second game against Ivanchuk I was very very angry. But I decided to win the last two games and this I did very easily.

'One of the best things here was Kortchnoi's prediction that Ivanchuk would win the tournament. And Botvinnik said the same in Amsterdam. This made me furious. They forgot that I can play chess, you know (laughs). It's not exactly impolite, but if you say that somebody will win the tournament when the World Champion participates, you have to add, 'If the World Champion plays badly.' Probably they forgot that I can play reasonably well. It was a very timely shock. So I thought, 'Everything is bad, the conditions are miserable, I'm alone, I have problems with an ingrowing nail, I'm tired and I've lost concentration. Now it's time to show your ability.' I think I did everything perfectly. I left 'De Parel' (the bungalow park at a forty minutes' drive from the playing hall where the players were housed – ed.), my first good move, and came to this hotel (right in the centre of Tilburg, at ten minutes from the playing hall – ed.). Psychologically this was very difficult because I had already unpacked my suitcase. I repacked and went to a very nice restaurant. I had my microclimate here and I started to play chess. I was working very hard. I had a challenge now, a real challenge. And don't forget that Tilburg 1981 was still in my mind. Since Tilburg 1981 I haven't lost any competition in which I participated.'

– *Is it a great relief that finally you have the Fischer legend behind you?*

'Not a relief. I feel I've done something very important for chess. Fischer's name now belongs to the past. His achievements were great, but now an active chess player has the record, and I'm glad it's me (laughs). It will help the further development of chess. It's a relief for chess. The door is open. Also it's quite important for my country. For the prestige of chess in my country. It was the only non-Soviet chess record.'

– *Your victory in Tilburg was the climax of a successful period. One month ago you were honoured as winner of the first World Cup cycle. How do you look back on this first cycle? How does winning the World Cup compare with winning the World Championship?*

'I think that the World Cup is an important step to promote essential chess events. To spread these events among the players. It has been said that it is elitist, but, come on, the World Championship match is even more elitist. Even in the Candidates' quarter finals only nine players are involved. Eight Candidates plus the World Champion. Right now we have an absolutely honest and fair qualification system for the World Cup, so nobody can complain that it is elitist anymore. If you want to play you have your chance. Regarding the World Cup title I must be modest, but I took a great risk by being one of the organizers and promoters of this new competition. Just imagine if somebody else had won this event. Many people would have serious doubts about the credibility of my title. I think that the World Championship match is the most important competition in the chess world. Everybody wants to know who is the World Champion, who is number one. In a match you can prove this in a very fair and honest way. But I think that in the future the World Cup will become very important. If we get the chance we will improve the system. The World Cup winner will become the second title and I hope that in the end these events will get as much publicity as the World Championship.

'Finally I have no doubts that the first experience was very successful. Don't forget it was our first experience. We were very short of time, there were big troubles with organizers. I have to reject all this criticism from Spassky and other players that the prizes were not so high. Yes, I understand, but you cannot improve everything in one go. My prize money for these four tournaments of 175 thousand dollars was very nice. Even with appearance fees I could hardly expect the same prize in four tournaments. Of course this is for the winner, but the conditions are improving from the top, not the bottom. I have no doubts that the prizes will be improved in the second World Cup. I'm sure a fifty percent increase can be guaranteed. The criticism was very unfair given the short period of time we had to complete these competitions.'

– *And the other point of criticism, that the tournaments are too long?*

'This is true. This I have to accept. It was a problem, especially with these local players. I think we can't have more than fourteen players in one tournament. Thirteen rounds is more than enough. I have presented my idea to the GMA board and I hope they will accept it. I propose to have 24 or 28 players, let's say 28 players. Six tournaments, everybody plays three tournaments with all three tournaments counting. Then after these six tournaments you have eight qualifiers and they will bring their average score, the average result of three tournaments, to the final double-round tournament. With this system you can increase the number of players, reduce the number of rounds and take away the criticism that the tournaments are not evenly balanced in strength. With this system it is not even necessary to arrange a single tournament with me and Karpov. We can play three different tournaments. There will be a final anyway. The question is how to find a major sponsor and how to increase the prizes. I estimate that for the next World Cup the prize-fund will be between two and two and a half million dollars.'

– *There is a likely risk that most sponsors will be interested only in the final tournament.*

'Exactly, but it is very important to find a major sponsor for all seven tournaments. One major sponsor and then the tournaments can be divided between the cities that will provide the prize-funds. But anyway the final tournament will be much more expensive. The final prize-fund for these eight players could be something like half a million dollars.'

– *Will it still be a two-year cycle?*

'I think the seventh tournament should be played in 1993, because 1993 is an empty year. There's only the World Championship match. It's very good for chess to have at the beginning of the year, let's say in February or March, an event like the Tournament World Championship and at the end of the year the real World Championship. The World Cup has created a new standard for chess. Unfortunately the players were not ready yet to show their worth, to meet their obligations to the tournaments. We must try to avoid short draws and put up really good performances. I don't want to go into a discussion about suit and tie, which is important from my point of view, but unfortunately very few players recognize this problem.'

– *How do you mean?*

'I think that it is important to play in suit and tie. This is my opinion.'

– *Because of the sponsors?*

'Yeah, if you want to find major sponsors, if you want to prove that this is an intelligent sport, not for poor people from the street, you must provide an image of chess players. But first of all you have to provide really high quality games, fighting chess. If you want to get money you have to present something. Many players do not realize that there is a connection. The difference between a World Championship match and other events is quite logical. Because everybody was interested in my matches against Karpov the prizes keep going up, up, up. There was no real interest in the other events and the players did not feel any obligation to create this interest. They see some money coming and they don't seem to think it can be increased, really increased to give them a better living. I can live better even without the GMA, but I think I have a duty as World Champion. The difference between what I earn and what other players earn is huge. I think that it is important that the whole chess world is going up, up, up. This is my moral obligation. But they should feel some obligations as professional players. However, the spirit of professionalism is unfortunately too weak now. Insipid draws are the main objection from the sponsors and the public. Probably we have to create some new ways to approach the public. More comments, more discussions with the press, more TV appearances. It's a long road, we are just at the beginning and we need new volunteers.'

– *Would you also like to combine these attempts with rapid chess competitions?*

'This is an important question. Only to combine. You can use rapid chess for charity events and other public events to create interest, to explain the chess rules, show the spirit of the chess fight, but nothing more. I'm categorically against any attempt to create a professional competition in active chess. Completely against. There are many players who want to encourage this active chess, or blitz chess. Even for example Max Dlugy, a very good friend of mine, has supported it many times. And now Walter Browne has created this Blitz Association. It's very short-sighted. It will destroy chess completely, the system we have been building despite so many difficulties. If the quality is disappearing, what can you expect from chess? You could play any other game on the table. It's no longer chess, it's something else.'

– *Over the last few years you have been very active in all kinds of chess exhibitions. What are your motives for playing a simul against 89 Minitel-users or a clock simul against the French national team?*

'OK, these are two different things. First there are normal simuls and such public appearances I feel are very important. The World Champion has to be in permanent contact with the public, especially in countries like France and Spain where chess is growing. These clock simuls are a different story. I like to play clock simuls against strong teams. When I was nine, in March '74, I played against a grandmaster for the first time. I was a pioneer from the Baku team and in the annual pioneers tournament I played against Tal, Averbakh, Kuzmin, Polugaevsky and Taimanov. In 1975 in Leningrad I played against six grandmasters including Karpov. I lost from a winning position in our first encounter. In 1981, when I was eighteen I played my first simul as a grandmaster. Until now I have played between 35 and 40 really strong clock simuls. Probably I have the richest experience in this kind of simuls. Three times, in 1981, 1985 and 1987 I played against the pioneers and many times I played simuls in the Botvinnik-Kasparov school on five or six boards. Don't forget that my opponents in these simuls were players like Akopian, Shirov, Serper, you know (laughing), Kramnik, very strong players. My pupils. I like this, I can play quite fast and I enjoy the opportunity for combinations. If I make a mistake, well this is very bad, but I'll have a very good move in another game.

'The first time I seriously played such a simul in the West was in 1985 in Hamburg against the HSV team over eight boards. I thought this was a team competition and I was a team so I refused to play eight whites. I had done no preparation and the team was quite strong. I mean, Chandler was on first board. I had just finished my match against Timman, I had annotated a game till half past three in the morning, I'd had a big press conference at Amsterdam airport and within two hours of my arrival in Hamburg I played the simul. I lost this simul. A year ago I returned and won seven to one. Although there was no Chandler, the simul was stronger and I think Chandler made a wise decision not to play. I was in no doubt about the likely result.

'I played against the German national youth team in 1986 and won 6½-1½. I also played against the juniors of the world by satellite with Patrick Wolff playing from America, Conquest from England, etcetera. I won 8½-1½ which is not bad either. I also played against the American national youth team including Patrick Wolff and Stuart Rachels and won 4-2. I was very tired but still the games were very exciting. I lost to Patrick Wolff in a very exciting game. And I played against the Swiss and French national teams, the French team twice. The last result was very impressive, I played very well against two grandmasters and four international masters. I enjoyed this very much. Now my dream is to play the German national team. I don't know whether they will agree. Friedel is trying to provide the conditions, a one hundred thousand deutschmark BMW for me if I win and a hundred thousand deutschmark for four players if they win. Hort, Lobron, Lau and Kindermann. This should be fun. I would like to meet this challenge.'

– *Let's return to the World Cup for a moment, which also must have been a great challenge for you. To my mind Belfort was your best tournament. Was this because the challenge was still fresh?*

'I had very bad feelings after Seville. OK, I won the last game, but still I understood that this was a terrible performance, a great shame. Well, not very bad, but very passive. I just wanted to save my title. This was my only idea. When I lost game sixteen I decided only to keep my title, nothing else. This thought didn't give me the chance to play normal chess. After the match my reputation was down. Then I played the blitz championship in Canada, in St. John. Well, sorry, even now I can beat anybody without any problems. I lost to Georgiev because I couldn't play after the first game. I had something like thirty seconds and I made a stalemate with queen and bishop. Having king, queen and bishop against king. It was terrible. My next appearance was in Amsterdam and you remember it was not bad (broad smile). And then in the first World Cup tournament in Belfort I played brilliantly. I think this was my best tournament despite the loss to Karpov. Now I think I have an explanation for this loss. I won five games in a row, against Ljubojevic, Andersson, Beliavsky, Ehlvest and Short. Five games against very strong players. Here in Tilburg I won five games in a row as well. Probably five games is now my limit? I can't win more than this. Then you lose energy. One hour after the game against Karpov I found that I could have played Rook c8. I immediately mentioned it to Yusupov who can confirm this. I am sure that I would have found this move in the game if I had played Karpov one round earlier. But by then I was too tired. It was not because my play was in a crisis. The next day in the final round I played Sokolov and killed him. One of my best games as you will remember.'

– *Another last round game that attracted quite some attention was your game against Spassky in Barcelona. How much truth is there in the story that you discussed the opening of this crucial encounter with him before the game?*

'Aah, that.. You have to understand my relationship with Spassky. It's normal for us to make many jokes. We have strange relations. Yes, we have different feelings about each other. The day before the last round we were having dinner together in the restaurant downstairs at the Ritz hotel. When I came down I had first asked Beliavsky what to play, e4 or d4. Sometimes Spassky offers me an opening. For instance in Reykjavik he suggested to me 'Let's play a Closed Sicilian'. And I said, 'OK, let's play a Closed Sicilian.' Then before the game, two hours later, he said, 'OK, I guarantee you the moves e4, c5, knight c3.' He didn't tell me his third move and after Knight c6 he played Bishop b5. So, it's nothing unusual and in Barcelona I told him 'I will play e4 if you guarantee me that you will play the same as against Ljubojevic. In his game against Ljubojevic he was better in the final position after Ljubojevic had made a mistake and after the game I said to Spassky, 'This line is very bad for Black.' And he replied 'If you want you can try it.' So now I asked him and he said 'I have to think about it.' Later he came up to my room with Ulf (Andersson) and said, 'No, I only guarantee you that I will play Spanish, but not which line.' Then I said, 'In that case let's forget about it, I will play d2-d4, the story is closed.' Well, actually I said that I wouldn't play e4, which means d4, and I played d4.'

'Karpov has never used one hundred percent of his energy.'

– *While onto the subject of last rounds, you could not have been too disappointed when you learned about Karpov losing his final three games in the Rotterdam World Cup tournament. What did you feel when you heard the news?*

'This is very interesting. When Karpov won against Sax, Roshal was sending reports, (in a dramatically enthusiastic tone) 'Karpov is coming'. I saw the games and realized that they were nothing special. But he was fighting. It is difficult to have this confirmed and Karpov may say, 'OK, now Garry produces this story', but at that moment I said that he was fighting too hard. He doesn't have enough energy to fight like this. The game with Salov was crucial and when he lost this game I felt that he would lose the tournament. Karpov is not used to concentrate fully. He has never used one hundred percent of his energy. This was his problem. He didn't play like Fischer. In Rotterdam he tried very hard. He probably felt that it was his last chance, but he wasn't ready to fight to the last bullet. He lost to Salov, then he was winning against Ljubo. But he has lost several games in this manner. There's no win by force, time-trouble, and he loses. And I had no questions about the game against Nunn. No, no, he couldn't fight, no chances. Actually I was a bit upset. The World Cup was over before the final tournament. When Karpov started to win I was preparing myself for a big fight in Skelleftea. I think I loosened up a bit after Rotterdam. I was still trying to prepare, but my mind kept telling me, 'the World Cup is over, the World Cup is over, the World Cup is over.' I just had to try not to lose Elo points and win the tournament. Of course this is very bad. If Karpov had won in Rotterdam I'm sure that I could have won many games in Skelleftea. Just look at the positions in Skelleftea. He can't complain that he was unlucky in Rotterdam, because then I can complain about Skelleftea. There the same could have happened as in Tilburg. The positions were very good. I just had to use them. I could win nine or ten games easily in Skelleftea. In the last round against Nikolic I played very well in the beginning, I was absolutely winning with black. And then I looked at the positions and thought, 'Karpov is worse against Ulf, I'm better', and immediately I made a mistake and Ulf made a mistake too.'

– *What about your relationship with Karpov these* *days? I gained the impression that you have reached a workable relationship.*

'Whether it's workable depends entirely on him, because I think that he was completely unreliable in our GMA discussions. He was too pro-FIDE. First of all he had his own interests, secondly FIDE interests, and thirdly GMA interests. It was very bad. Right now he has changed a little bit. He doesn't care about FIDE anymore and he is ready to combine his interests and GMA interests, which is very good. I'm very glad that he signed the petition (the consensus reached between the Candidates' semi-finalists and Kasparov about the further proceedings of the current World Championship cycle – ed.) and he wasn't isolated. I appreciate that we have this kind of unity. But still I think that Karpov is not really ready to give up some advantages in the interest of the GMA. Which is bad according to me, but which is probably right according to him.'

– *There was this story you were supposed to have told at a press conference in, was it in Switzerland?, when you were asked about stimulants..*

'(Immediately jumps at this) This is very interesting. Where was this press conference? In Switzerland? Now there are three possible versions. The official Spanish press release said that this press conference was in Graz, in Austria. Now you say it was in Switzerland..'

– *No, I'm simply mistaken..*

'Actually, as far as I can remember, this press conference was in Las Palmas. It was a normal question. Can you use drugs, stimulants, in chess? My answer was absolutely normal. I said 'You can't. It affects you very badly, because it only has a short-term effect. But you have to play for many months or at least for some weeks. So, there's no use.' Then they asked, 'We heard rumours that in the first match Karpov probably used them.' And I said, 'Probably, but it's better to ask Karpov.' This was my answer, but the transcription was different. Then Karpov wrote an official letter to the GMA and said that Kasparov should write an explanation. My reply was very simple. First of all the fact that they mentioned Graz instead of Las Palmas indicates that it's just rumours. Secondly, if Karpov wants to seriously accuse me he must get the tape or a confirmation from this Spanish agency or newspaper. A newspaper with rumours is not enough for me, I'm not going to reply. I think that in the end we more or less managed to solve this problem. I understand he was insulted by these publications, but sorry, it had nothing to do with me. A newspaper reversed my words and insulted another player. I can help this player to accuse the newspaper, but I'm not going to defend myself.'

– *Much of your energy is spent away from the chess board. This year was again a very busy year. You helped organize the Moscow GMA qualifier, found a sponsor for the GMA qualifier in Palma and at the same time you continued your fight against FIDE and did your other work as president of the GMA. On which of these activities do you look back with most satisfaction?*

'The Moscow tournament. Yes, this was a great success. Not only for the GMA. After this tournament we were also able to create an independent chess union, which is now the official opposition to a non-existent federation. I was very happy to get this going. If you know the situation in my country you will understand that it is very difficult to organize an independent competition without official state support. I found some good friends among officials, I received support from a trade union organization and from a cooperative enterprise. Very intelligent, very bright people who knew how to approach sponsors, how to find money. OK, I can tell you, we spent nine-hundred thousand roubles and about two-hundred thousand dollars for the tournament. Nobody could complain about the quality of the tournament despite all the stories. After the first GMA qualifier in Belgrade many people didn't want to go to Moscow. They didn't believe in the tournament and thought the conditions would be miserable in the Soviet Union. I think it was a decisive win over the conservative mentality of many players and sponsors.'

– *What are your expectations concerning the third GMA qualification tournament in Palma?*

'Oh, Palma will be a great success. The latest news I received from Palma is very good. Everything is running very smoothly. And the Balearic government agreed to open a Kasparov chess centre. They will give a hundred million pesetas, which is about nine-hundred thousand dollars, for the building, for accommodation, and we will launch the academy in December. In the middle of next year we will start the first sessions for young western players.'

– *Can you tell something more about this project?*

'Again it's my childhood impressions. When I was ten years old I was invited to the Botvinnik school and I felt very happy and lucky to be among his pupils. I learned a lot from him and other great Soviet players. It's a kind of tradition, a spiritual tradition in our country. The new generation profits from the experience of the older generation. When I became World Champion I felt that it was very important to re-establish this tradition, because nobody paid enough attention to it. I helped Botvinnik work on this school and now it's my school. Some time ago I conceived the idea to create one united academy for the whole Soviet Union. I couldn't find financial and political support, nobody cared about it. Now the time is not right in the Soviet Union. So I failed and then I realized that it's much better to move this academy to the West. I got a very nice reception in Palma. In February we talked about it and in June we signed the protocol of intention and I hope in December we will open this academy. It will help to improve chess throughout the world. We also plan to open a special faculty for national coaches. I can bring ten or fifteen Soviet coaches, but this is not enough for the whole world.'

– *Aren't you afraid there will be problems with the Soviet authorities?*

'No, no, no. We are planning to create a special academy in the Soviet Union under the supervision of the independent chess union and this academy will send coaches. But it will also operate in the Soviet Union. No, we won't forget our people, our kids. The problem is that it's a very bad time for chess in the Soviet Union. But Soviet chess won't suffer. We really want to help them, although it's extremely difficult. Because you have the old chess organisation, you have these national controversies. If you want to help you need people who will let you help them. That's not so simple for us.'

– *In Brussels at the World Cup prize-giving you asked Bessel Kok to stand for president of FIDE. Do you think that this is the only way to avoid a split in the chess world?*

'I'm sure, and I hope that many people share this view, that we need two organizations. We need a professional organization, let's call it the GMA, probably it will change in the future, and we need FIDE. Let's call it FIDE, anyway a general organization which should cover the development of chess such as these academies, these schools, everything. The GMA is going in the right direction. Within FIDE everything is wrong. I don't want to repeat that it is corrupt or that it is ignorant, but everything is absolutely wrong. I want FIDE to survive, but in order to achieve this they must first of all change the people and then the structure. The only chance is to get rid of Campomanes, all these corrupt people, terrible people like Ghobash, Toran and Makropoulos, and to replace them by normal people. I believe Bessel is the only person who can save FIDE, who can give FIDE a real chance, not only to survive, but to be reborn, to get a second wind. The current FIDE leadership can't accept the GMA as it is, but if they want to fight us they will be destroyed in this fight. There's no doubt about that. They don't care about FIDE. I care more about FIDE than they do. Because in the future all these academies should be under the supervision of FIDE. I'm only the World Champion. I can't spend my whole life organizing these centres. If they want to fight, then they will be killed. We have so many trumps and so much power in our hands now. But I repeat, we don't want to fight and we did send this peace proposal. I think it is much better not to deal with Campomanes, but still we sent this peace proposal. They rejected all our peaceful proposals. I hope that the FIDE delegates will realize this and will kick Campomanes and his mafia out themselves. Because this is a real mafia. We don't even know under which law they are operating. Nobody knows, it's a secret.'

– *Not under Philippine law?*

'No, come on, nobody knows. Probably the organisation is illegal. They can't exist. If they don't realize it, well, that's their bad luck. The only way Campomanes can help and promote chess is by resigning now and taking all these people with him. As FIDE president he is destroying FIDE. If it is necessary I will fight till the very end. Apart from a powerful organisation, apart from public opinion, apart from everything we have in our hands, I have the World Championship title. Right now I also have the best Elo ever, which probably is helpful too.'

– *In view of your fight against FIDE I have been* *wondering about your world title. Is it yours in a legal sense?*

'Nobody knows, but I'm sure there's no legal ground for it. But just let's go into history. What's my number?'

– *Thirteen.*

'Thirteen. So who was the first World Champion? Steinitz. Steinitz, Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine and Euwe. They became World Champion without FIDE. I would be number eight if it's a FIDE title. This means that the title can't belong to FIDE, because officially I'm still number thirteen. Everything about the organisation of the World Championship match by FIDE was so amateurish that nobody cared about the legal standing of the world title. But in the public opinion I am the thirteenth World Champion and the only legal or legitimate way to become the fourteenth World Champion is to beat me. He can't appear without beating me.'

– *What do you think will be the next step in the negotiations between the GMA and FIDE?*

'I think war is inevitable. The last crusade of FIDE. The GMA will provide professional conditions. We need GMA performance ratings, a new system. We need professional team competitions. This is my dream, to have professional team competitions sponsored by multinationals. I would like to see sponsored teams with regular salaries for the players. Fifty to sixty real professionals. They have to be professionals because their salary will depend on their behaviour.'

– *You mean something like Kasparov playing first board for Hamburg and Karpov playing first board for Rotterdam?*

'No, no, Kasparov playing first board of eh... Crédit Lyonnais, and Karpov playing first board of, I don't know, Mitsubishi. Fully professional teams. This will be the last step to create a professional chess world. This is my dream. It will be done in the next two or three years. I guess we can start with ten teams, six, seven players, probably including one woman. But women, this is the Polgar problem. An absolutely unprofessional story.'

– *What's wrong with the Polgar story?*

'They are spoiling the professional chess world with their conditions. If the organizers provide such great conditions for potential talent this is very bad for professional chess. Everything should have an objective value. In a professional chess world you wouldn't give somebody more than he deserves. But in our chess world this happens. You can offer one sister more than you offer Kortchnoi and nobody cares. Which is very bad. But this is another story. Probably we will have to include one woman.'

– *And once you have realized this you can look back on your work as a satisfied man?*

'Absolutely satisfied. Then we will have everything and it will be the beginning of professional chess. My job will be over. I will have completed my duty. I guess that I'm continuing Fischer's fight. In his days it was hopeless, because it was too early. He did a lot. At least he gave a very good example of how to fight against bureaucracy. His task was hopeless, because the time was wrong, the public wasn't ready and he had no real support from players and sponsors. Somebody has to sacrifice himself for the success of the future generation. It was because of Fischer's sacrifice that they couldn't disqualify me. FIDE couldn't use the only weapon they have against the World Champion. By preserving my title I could continue Fischer's ideas and now I guess I have achieved almost everything he wanted. Probably the World Championship will be independent from FIDE, that's exactly what he wanted. We've got the World Cup and there's the idea I just told you about. He would be very happy.'

– *Of late you haven't limited your criticism to the wrongs in the chess world. In the November issue of* Playboy *you severely criticized the stagnation in Gorbachov's politics. What changes do you think are needed in the Soviet Union?*

'It's not a matter of what changes. The point is that there should be changes. Right now we have no real changes. There are some changes in the Soviet Union, but they are caused by the situation and not by the government. I guess that Gorbachov's government has a limit and they've reached that limit already. They are not in control and now they are being threatening. Like yesterday. There was a meeting of delegates and they claimed that they needed a fifteen-month ban on strikes. It's like a dictatorship. I don't think they realize that there's no way to repair this rotting regime. Because it was not only rotting during the stagnation period as Gorbachov calls Brezhnev's time, but it is rotting still. Now that it's too late they want to use strength. The people are very unhappy and they are completely against this kind of politics. The government is going to lose if they insist on using strong measures.

'It's important for me to talk about this. Perhaps I am making a mistake, I don't know, but if you want democracy you need different opinions. I'm World Champion, I'm well-known in the West, in the whole world, and people can listen to me and compare these different opinions. It is very bad if you only want Gorbachov's opinion. I don't understand the bulk of the western press because they still continue to make these comparisons between liberals and conservatives in the Communist Party, ignoring completely the real strength of the country, the Soviet people. I think the people don't care who are going to win, the liberals or the conservatives in the Communist Party. They want to see food, they want to see agricultural and industrial changes, they want to see human rights, they want to see normal salaries, normal living conditions. And I think that neither the liberals nor the conservatives are able to give them these.'

– *Aren't you afraid that publicly pronouncing your opinion will bring you into trouble?*

'Well, I have many friends, for example Yuri Afanasiev, who take really serious risks. You know, somebody has to speak. Somebody must be the first. I feel that I have this chance. If I don't speak, if I leave my country, if I live in the West, this would be a very bad example for the Soviet people. People say, 'If Garry didn't do so many things in chess politics or in general politics or in business, he could be even more successful.' Yes, OK, but without the organisation of the tournament in Moscow, without Palma, without this fight against FIDE, I couldn't become Kasparov. I have gained strength by fighting against the system. At first I was fighting against the domestic federation in Azerbaijan, then against the Soviet national federation, then against FIDE, then against the Sports Committee of the Soviet ministry. By now I have to challenge the system itself. Don't forget that ever since my childhood I've had this slogan 'If not you, who else?' (a line borrowed from the poet/songwriter Vladimir Vissotsky – ed.). I mean, if not me, who else?'

– *What part did Vladimir Vissotsky play in all this?*

'I think he played an extremely important part in the formation of my mentality. I don't know how, genetically or from books, I got this strong feeling that something was wrong in my country. Vissotsky's songs and his life gave me a new impression, a new vision of life. As I understood him better and better I came to the conclusion that the lives of people like Vissotsky should be continued. Their dedication to us changed a lot in our souls and somebody has to continue this. And if I feel the strength, why not me? Yes, I can do it. I have very good relations with his widow, Marina Vlady, we are very good friends. Probably she feels that I have the same kind of mentality.'

– *Despite the fact that you are still very much the same Kasparov, who relentlessly continues his fight and keeps playing great chess, I get the impression that lately you have become calmer, less impulsive.*

'Yes, this is true. First of all there is age. I'm getting older, wiser, more experienced. On the other hand I can now see the result of my fight. When I started my fight I was almost alone and I felt like a raider, dropping explosions and bombs in the enemy camp. This is all very nice, but you can't win the war in this way. You can create a big mess, but you won't win the war. Right now the character of this war has changed completely. Now my side is on the offensive, we've got the initiative, we're moving forward to the enemy's camp. I have troops behind me and we occupy the centre. There's a big difference between these two fights. Having real strength behind you makes you calm. The war of three years ago couldn't continue without these impulsive actions. But this fight in Dubai, against FIDE, alone against the whole organization, against my own national federation, against everybody, this fight started the GMA.'

– *And now you're looking back and there's no regrets.*

'No, I have no regrets. Certainly, I made mistakes, but if you play a risky game and you have everything on the table, you can't avoid mistakes. And I accept only this kind of game, with everything on the table. I was very lucky, and I think that many people can't forgive me such luck in that I was never seriously punished for my mistakes. I was given enough time to rectify these mistakes and I always rectified them.'

I don't know whether it is money, reputation, or Dirk Jan's aftershave, but whatever it is, New In Chess has always been able to persuade the greatest figures in world chess to grant them interviews. This applies even to those players, who are most hostile to such media intrusion in their lives. One such example is the following piece from New In Chess 1990/3, the only published interview I have ever seen with Lajos Portisch.

Lajos Portisch: 'I'm not such a solid person, I'm too aggressive'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

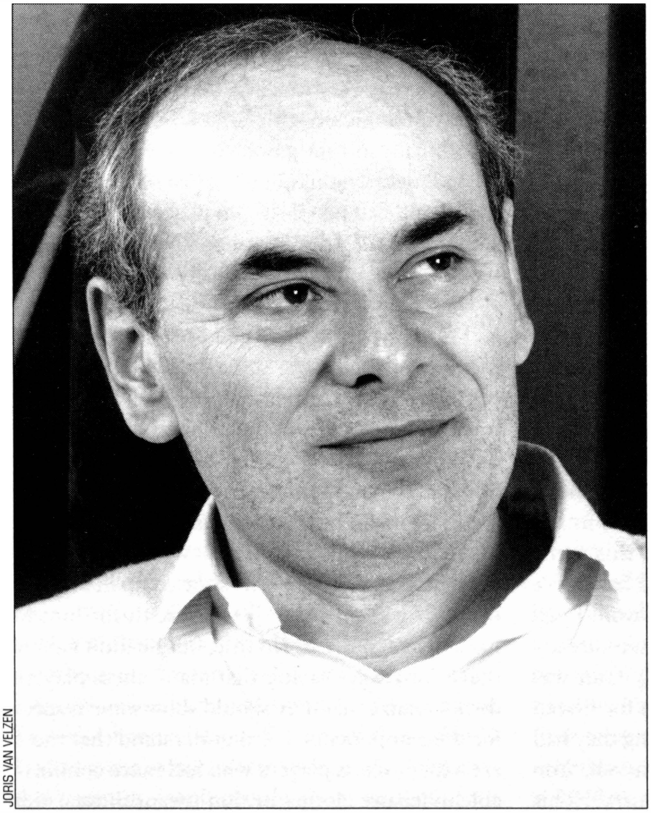
It is hard to imagine that there was once a time when Lajos Portisch was not around in the international chess arena. For more than three decades he has been Hungary's uncontested number one player.

Before he lost interest in the Hungarian championship Portisch won the national title nine times, while he defended the Hungarian colours at sixteen Olympiads, the absolute highlight being Buenos Aires '78, when he led the team that broke the perennial Soviet hegemony. Eight times he qualified for the Candidates matches, twice reaching the semifinals, and in countless international events he took first prize. A paragon of dedication and discipline, Portisch is the only player in the world whose Elo has never fallen under 2600 since the ratings were introduced in the early seventies. Yet, this sphinxlike man is the kind of celebrity every chess fan knows, but no one really knows anything about. Shunning publicity as much as possible he never revealed what makes him tick and it was only after repeated requests that he allowed himself to be persuaded into granting an extensive interview. 'I don't like to give interviews, so you must realize that this is an exception.' That did not sound very encouraging, but his warning was accompanied by a loud laugh and for two and a half hours he talked freely about the changed chess world, Fischer, Sax, Kadar, weightlifting, music and much more. So that was why we had been looking forward to this talk for so long.

– *What strikes you in particular as having changed in the chess world since you started on your international career?'*

'When I played my first international tournament there were hardly any good magazines or books available. The first good international periodical we had was Euwe's *Losbladige*, which appeared every month. It is still being published in Germany as *Schach Archiv*, and I still get it. Now there are so many chess magazines that there's no question of reading them all, unless you have people who do the work for you, like the Russians. Another thing I simply hate are these chess diskettes and computers. I think I have such experience in chess that I can do without them. It's not important if I don't know the latest analyses, because my chess intuition is such that I can always choose the right method of play. Of course, I don't want to reveal any chess secrets, but I'm not so familiar with these modern lines, like the Dragon. But I have my own theory, which I know very well.

'I have always liked analysing a lot. I was so productive. A lot of variations and novelties that were adopted by other players were actually mine. Take for instance this Nimzo-Indian variation which



JORIS VAN VELZEN

Lajos Portisch, one of the strongest and most consistent of GMs, over a 30-year period.

they call the Hübner Variation. I'm always angry about that, because I already played that line in the fifties, from 1952 till the Bled tournament in 1960. But it was forgotten because it wasn't considered very good. Then suddenly a few years later Hübner started to play it and also Fischer and now they call it the Hübner Variation. I have all respect for Mr Hübner, but they forgot that it was actually my idea. But I was not such a well-known player at that time.'

– Is it true that you worked or still work eight hours a day? Or is this the Portisch legend?

This is the legend, of course. The truth is that I'm still capable of working as many hours as I want, but the point is that I don't want to. If there's something that interests me I'm still able to work eight or even ten hours a day, but nowadays I work two or three hours a day on average. Of course, I've always been working hard in chess. I had to do a lot of things on my own. I didn't get much help in Hungary and I didn't have as many good seconds as the Russians. Well, Fischer once asked me, 'Lajos, is it true that you work eight hours a day?' And I said, 'Why are you asking? People also think that you work eight hours a day.' Then Bobby said, 'Oh yes, but they think that I am crazy.'

– In Hungary you succeeded a generation of players like Szabo, Lengyel and Barcza. It wasn't till the seventies that a new generation of strong grandmasters appeared with Ribli, Sax and Adorjan. Was it bad luck for you to be the country's only strong grandmaster for such a long period?

'My bad luck was that I was born in a small village far from Budapest. There was no chess life, although there was a nice old man who taught me the moves. The elements of chess I learned from him, but I had to learn a lot of things from books in those years. When I got to Budapest I was already a master player. Within two or three years' time I won the Hungarian championship. Then the problem was that there weren't so many international tournaments and it was very difficult to get good invitations. I was just lacking experience. The other problem was that I started a little late. When I was twelve my brother and I got a chess set for Christmas, but it took at least a year before I realized that I had some talent for chess. But that's maybe why I'm still playing, because the sooner you start the quicker you lose your interest or ambitions.'

– Did it help you that you could train together with your brother? (Ferenc Portisch, who became an IM in 1975- DJtG)

'That was only in the very first years, because I became stronger much more quickly than he did. So we stopped analysing together. But I almost always work alone. Sometimes I meet friends and we check some variations. Or when I was preparing for my match against Timman, I worked with my second a little. But the ideas come from me and I'm still very creative. In every game of that match I introduced a new move that was playable.'

– *How much confidence do you have in seconds ever since your Candidates' match against Hübner in 1980, when three seconds proved unable to analyse a winning position properly?*

'This is a fundamental problem, of course. There was a time when this whole problem of seconds irritated me. I think chess is an individual game and there shouldn't be any help from a third party. Not only when the game is in progress, but in general. Especially the Russians have all the advantages of this, which is why they are still fighting to have adjournments in tournaments. For Botvinnik it was one of his principles to adjourn in a good position and then analyse it at home. I think that for reasons of principle it is unfair to have seconds. What happened in this game against Hübner was my own fault. I had three seconds and the position was simply won. I just left them to work out how, because I was already thinking ahead to the next game. My fault was that I didn't check it. I just sat down for fifteen minutes and they showed me everything they had analysed. I was very tired and said to myself, 'You have three seconds, why should you worry?' This was just the proof of my theory that maybe it is better to have no seconds at all. In a tournament I can afford to have no second, but in a match where your opponent has two or three seconds you have little choice.'

– *I've always been impressed by your disciplined attitude towards chess. Is this something you have learned through the years or is it part of your character?*

'Maybe it's just my character. In many other things I'm disciplined as well. Maybe those who live a bit more like bohemians have an easier life, but I always had to pay a heavy price when I didn't follow my principles. There are many rules which you should follow, but the older you get the more difficult it is. For example, in my very first years in the international arena I said to myself, 'You'd better be on your own. You'd better not talk much with anyone else, it might bother you'. This is because of my lunch with Fischer and Benko during the Interzonal in Stockholm. I don't blame them, but I made a stupid mistake. The three of us had lunch together before the last round, in which I was to play Aaron from India. During the meal they were joking and said things like, 'Lajos, you'd better be careful. This guy is very dangerous. You may very well lose this game.'

'Psychologically this shocked me a bit and then I really lost the game. Benko is still unhappy when I mention this (laughs). Of course, it wasn't their fault. But people like to play with words and sometimes they don't realize how heavily these words affect you psychologically.'

– *How did you get along with Fischer?*

'I think we always had good relations. I still remember our last game at the Siegen Olympiad in 1970. It was on a Sunday and we both showed up for the game in black suits. Because it was Sunday and out of respect for each other. But unfortunately many things have changed. I always paid a lot of attention to stories like the one I read in Alekhine's book. When he was about to lose the match against Euwe he showed up in evening dress. It was probably very difficult for him to have to resign the world title, but he didn't show that. I'm always saying that many chess players do not realize that they should show some respect for their opponents. I also understand that there are a lot of chess players who feel more comfortable in leisure clothes or don't want to wear ties (laughs). I still remember Larsen during the Interzonal in Palma de Mallorca. We were staying in the same hotel and in Spain at that time you couldn't show up for dinner without a tie. So when he was about to enter the restaurant without a tie the head-waiter didn't let him in and offered him a tie. Larsen was very upset, but he accepted the tie saying, 'The last time I wore a tie was at my wedding'. Another thing that disturbs me is that there are chess players who discuss their games and simply want to get advice from others, while they are playing. I'm not saying that all the people who are chatting while the games are still in progress are talking about their games. They may speak about the weather or music or girls, whatever, but still it's a bit irritating. Unfortunately I don't know any arbiters who take steps against this, although I think this is in the rules of chess. I never saw Fischer speaking with anyone while he was playing. He was absolutely fair in these matters. People think this is not so important, but it is. At the beginning of this century you were not even supposed to analyse adjourned positions and the players went for dinner together. There was this code, but then everything changed. Unfortunately this gentlemanlike behaviour among chess players is out of fashion. It's my principle that you should respect your opponent as much as you respect yourself. When your opponent is suffering to find the best move and you are laughing and chatting with somebody else, this is not done. But you asked about Fischer. I always thought that he was a great player and it's a disgrace what the chess world has done to him. It was obviously FIDE's fault. Something like that should not be done to the world champion.'

– *Was this one of the reasons why you wanted to be involved in the GMA?'*

'Kasparov asked me to be a member of the GMA and I thought that was a good idea. One of the reasons was that I had a lot of bad experiences with FIDE through these many years. The whole chess world was so badly organized. I can give you an example. When FIDE was about to take a decision on this famous Fischer-Karpov match I was on a simultaneous tour of England and the English Channel Islands. On one of these islands, I don't want to say exactly which one, because I don't want to insult people, the president of the federation was a tomato farmer. A very nice gentleman, but a very weak chess player. He played in a simul against me and on the reception following this simul he came to me and asked me 'Lajos, what do you think? At the FIDE congress I have to vote either for Karpov or for Fischer. Whom shall I vote for?' And I said 'Look, it doesn't matter what I am saying to you. I am sure that Mr Edmondson, the president of the American Chess Federation and also Mr Baturinsky from the Soviet Federation will soon pay you a visit and try to persuade you.'

'And people like him, although he was a nice man, and many more such delegates from countries all over the world decided on very important chess issues. So I thought that the GMA would be a good opposition, but unfortunately I'm not very satisfied with what's going on right now. Right after the Skelleftea tournament I resigned as a board member in Brussels. I don't want to go into any particulars, but in general I don't like what's happening.'

– *One of the reasons why you wore this black suit against Fischer was that it was Sunday. Has it ever been a problem for you to be a Catholic in a socialist country?*

'Actually never, because they never dared to say anything about it. When they realized I was a religious person I was already a well-known chess player. For example, the morning after we had won the chess Olympiad in Buenos Aires in '78, me and two other players ran into the chief of the Hungarian delegation in the hall of the hotel. Well, he was a nice man, but a strong communist. And he said, 'Where are you going?' And I said, 'To church to give thanks that we won the Olympiad'. And his answer was, 'Yes, well done, well done. Go, go.' (laughs) It was a bit funny and we started to laugh, well, smile at least, that a communist leader should say something like that.'

– *Did they never ask you to join the communist party when you had become a famous chess player?*

'Actually they never asked me. They probably realized that I would say no. Of course, I never wanted to be a member. I never was a member of any party in my whole life. Now there are so many parties in Hungary that maybe it's high time to start with one of them. But I don't care very much about politics (laughs). Of course, they wanted me to be a member of the presidium of the Hungarian Chess Federation, but I never wanted that. I've always thought that there would be a conflict if a leading player took advantage of his membership of a governing body. I didn't want to be blamed for that. That's why I was so surprised when I had to read that stupid interview with Sax in the latest Interpolis tournament book.' (In this article Sax accused Portisch of having frustrated his generation's development and opportunities for many years. According to Sax, Portisch carefully protected his own privileges and opposed international invitations for other players. Together with Szerenyi, the federation's president, he allegedly determined the course of Hungarian chess in his own interests only – DJtG)

'This interview is full of nonsense. I don't remember ever having done anything against another Hungarian player. My only answer to this interview is that now Timman is making a serious mistake by including Sax in his camp.'

– *Were you aware that there was so much envy among your colleagues?*

'Of course, there is much envy. That's the problem, we are only humans. The younger grandmasters still cannot... how shall I put this without insulting them too much... they have to understand that I'm still there. Twenty years ago they may already have thought that it was time for the take-over, but it still hasn't happened. But this interview irritated me very much, because of all the lies and nonsense. For example, he says that the president of the Hungarian Chess Federation visited me in my villa every weekend. My answer is that unfortunately I don't have a villa (laughs). Anyway, you must realize that nowadays with this rating system, organizers are thinking in categories. They invite you if your rating is high. It's as simple as that. So that has nothing to do with my relations with organizers. I never stopped organizers from inviting other Hungarian players, although they have asked me many times what would happen if they would. My answer was always 'That's your problem, not mine. Please do what you want.' Maybe they expected that I wouldn't play in that case, but that's absolute rubbish of course. That's why I'm so surprised by this stupid interview. I really don't understand.'

– *Were you in the position to achieve the things that Sax is accusing you of?*

'Of course not. As Hungary's best player for many years I have obviously often been asked my opinion, but I have to tell you that unfortunately my view was seldom accepted. For example, in this Adorjan case. Perhaps you remember that in 1980 and 1982 he was left out of the Olympiad team and especially in 1982 there was a boycott against him by three Hungarian grandmasters. I thought this was unfair towards a colleague and I told the president and the vice-president of the federation that I hated that kind of thing and thought that Adorjan deserved a place on the team because of his strength. But he was left out of the team anyway. I have always been opposed to boycotts, be they personal or political. I remember very well that in 1960, when I played in the Zonal Tournament for the first time, there were some problems with the East German grandmaster Pietzsch, because the Spanish organizers refused to put the East German flag on his table. And then Mr Pachman, who at the time was a communist fighter for Czechoslovakia, said we should not play. But I said 'No, this is my first Zonal Tournament. You can do what you want, but I'm going to play.' The consequence of this Adorjan boycott was that during this entire event in Lucerne I carefully avoided any conversation with these three players. That was the reason why after the last Olympiad (where Portisch scored 8½/11 on first board, the second best result after Kasparov! – DJtG) I decided that I will not play on the Hungarian team anymore. In the meantime I have already been asked several times by the new Hungarian federation to change my mind, but I'm afraid I can't (with a muffled laugh)'.

– *Maybe your colleagues also envied you for the fact that you were a good friend of the mightiest man in the country, the late Mr Kadar?*

'Well, I wouldn't say that I was a good friend of his, but he liked chess very much and obviously knew me as Hungary's best player. But I didn't get any special help from him. Except for once, when I wrote him a letter. This was before the second Piatigorsky Cup. The Hungarian Sports Committee refused to let me play in a tournament in America, saying 'You'd better not go there, because the Americans are bombing Vietnam.' That was how they actually put it. So, I wrote a letter to Mr Kadar explaining that this was such an important chess event and that I would lose a lot if I couldn't go there. He accepted my points and took steps so that I got permission to play there. But we couldn't have been friends. Firstly there was a big difference in age and secondly he had other interests and I never had any political interests. I think that he was an honest man, although there has been a lot of criticism. But I'm not a politician and it is up to others to judge his political mistakes and his political heritage. But as I knew him as a man I think he was an honest person.'

– *What role do you think the Polgars will play in the future of Hungarian chess?*

'The Polgars go their own way and probably they are right in that respect. The father realizes that you will always face difficulties when you do something original. I'm not convinced by their theory, but that doesn't matter. It's not my problem, but still we have to admit that they are doing something original. It's an interesting challenge. Of course, I'm impressed that the girls are so talented, but I cannot believe that a woman can be overall champion in chess. This is just against nature, both physically and mentally, and you cannot ignore nature. But we have to give them some credit. Maybe

I'm too traditional. Not so long ago people didn't believe that mankind could reach the moon, but maybe it's even more difficult for a woman chess player to win the male title. But, of course, this is not their fault.'

– *When I asked Judit about the help she got from Hungarian grandmasters her mother answered, 'Portisch said he couldn't help us because he was too much on his own.'*

'I said that I was so busy with my own problems in chess that I simply cannot help anybody else. Maybe I am too individualistic. I don't care so much about other persons' problems. I'm too difficult for myself (laughs). You understand what I mean. It's very difficult for me to handle myself and I do not want to force my ideas on anyone else. And this is what I certainly would do if I coached somebody. For example, if I worked with the Polgars I would certainly insist immediately that they fight for the female title and we would immediately have a conflict. And why should we, when we have normal relations? I don't say that we are friends, but we have been in the same club for many years. Actually there is a young Hungarian talent whom I occasionally give some advice. Once a month or once every two months. But this is just because his parents are friends of us. I don't think I could coach someone regularly. I have other interests and life is too short. I have already sacrificed too much for chess.'

– *Talking about other interests, at the drawing of lots in Skelleftea you were the only player who could lift this gold bar with one hand. Somebody said this was because of the weightlifting you had done.*

'Yes, that was one of my favourite sports, but when we moved to a new apartment I had to give it up. My wife simply forbade it. She said it had ruined our previous apartment, because I always fell to the floor with these weights. But these were only exercises with small weights. I wanted to get acquainted with the technique and I wanted to know how strong I was. I didn't work with heavy weights, the maximum was fifty kilos. But the point is that it doesn't matter so much how big the weight is, but how many times you can push or lift it.'

– *What other sports do you like?*

'Well, I've played tennis, but I'm a very weak tennis player, because I never had a talent for the ball. And, of course, I always liked soccer, but I wasn't a good soccer player either. When I was at school I was always the goalkeeper. But I'm a good swimmer. When I'm at home I regularly go to the swimming pool and they let me swim in the same lane where (Thomasz) Dany, the Olympic swimming champion, normally trains. He is Hungary's best swimmer. Actually he won the Olympic games with the same glasses I gave to him in the pool. He saw my glasses and said, 'What nice glasses,' and I said, 'Well, please, it's a present. I hope you'll win.'

'But again these sports we are talking about, except for tennis, they show the loneliness. You swim for one hour and you are in the water alone, just like in chess. It looks like (thinks), I would say like 'Einsamkeit' from the Winterreise. (*Einsamkeit* is the saddest song from Schubert's most famous song cycle – DJtG) Sometimes being on your own is sad, but it also gives you confidence.'

– *You generally make a serious impression. Are you never afraid that you put people off?*

'Well, I don't know. Chess is a very serious game and with my behaviour and principles I put some ideas into chess in the hope that someone will discover them and perhaps sooner or later follow them. Even if it's so difficult. Well, you never know. Once, for instance, I was very surprised when Sosonko blamed me that I had been disturbing him during the game. This was in the last round of Reggio Emilia, which was played very early in the morning. I know it's terrible to play very early in the morning, but as it turned out I played very well that morning and won a beautiful game. Of course, he was very unhappy and at the end of the game he said to me, 'You're not supposed to push the button of the clock with a piece in your hand.' I replied, 'I don't know. Why?' and I said, 'But you are not supposed to continuously look for dust particles on the chess board.' But this was the only conflict I ever had when my opponent lost a game.'

– *I remember Sosonko once told me a story about a game against you. He had a very good position and when he got up to walk around and started talking to someone you shushed him. He was scared stiff, returned to the board and lost the game.*

'(Starts laughing loudly) No, I can't remember that, but maybe I did. Maybe I felt that I had to warn him to stop talking. I haven't done this often, I would rather shoot a glance and make clear that I found that this wasn't fair. This is in the rules. Like it is also forbidden to leave the playing room during the game. For instance, in Reggio last December I had forgotten my chocolate in my room and I went to the arbiter and asked her, 'I want to go to my room, can someone come with me?' And this guy who accompanied me didn't understand why I asked that.'

– *Of late, music has become more and more important to you. Have you always been an ardent music lover?*

'Even before I started playing chess I was already playing the violin, from when I was five or six years old. My parents actually wanted me to become a violinist. But it is more difficult to achieve results in music than it is in chess. You don't feel the taste of victory so quickly. When you are a young girl or boy and play chess, pretty soon you are able to beat an adult, but when you are a small musician you have to work and train every day and I hated that very much. When I began playing chess I slowly lost my interest in the violin. I thought it was much easier to achieve success in chess than in music. But nevertheless music has always remained something special and beautiful for me. I still have this old violin, but I very seldom pick it up anymore. My fingers no longer move like they should because I lost the technique. And I was always singing, even when I was still young. Every time I came home from Budapest, after I had moved there, my mother would say 'The neighbours can hear that you are back.' I always knew that I had an acceptable voice and I dreamed that I might have been a good opera singer. At that time, when I was eighteen or nineteen, I was mostly singing opera songs. I never liked this so-called light music, except for really good musicians like Elvis Presley, Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra. I always preferred serious music, although even today I will occasionally sing Hungarian folk songs. Which is very nice, especially when you are sitting at a table with a glass of wine and have a nice gipsy band behind you.

'Then, in 1985, came the time when I thought it was my last chance to start my serious music education again. And ever since I have been working with my teacher. She's a professor at the Hungarian Academy of Music and when I'm at home I go to her at least once, but mostly twice a week.'

– *When we talked about music a couple of years ago you were still very much interested in opera. This interest has obviously shifted to songs and your recent recital on Hungarian radio was entirely made up of songs.*

'My teacher is a Lieder singer, so... And also now I think that these songs fit my voice better than the arias. I still like opera, but for me learning a whole opera doesn't make much sense. Where can I sing an opera? Although there is one role from a Hungarian opera, well, not exactly an opera, but something in between opera and operetta, that I know. Last year I was given the honours of the town where I was born. At the reception I talked about the dreams you have as a chess player and a singer and I said 'I will probably never become world champion in chess anymore, but I can still hope that I can arrange something with the opera company in Zalaegerszeg and sing that role.'

– *Your colleagues cannot fail to notice that you continue your singing exercises during tournaments. Does this help your chess?*

'It certainly helps my mood. In chess it's very difficult to get rid of your problems when you lose a game or miss chances. In those cases music is a very good outlet.'

– *What did you do at such moments when you weren't singing yet?*

'(Laughs) This is a good question. Probably I was suffering more. I didn't have any compensation then. This is the problem. All chess players suffer and those who take it more seriously suffer more.'

– *Have you always been able to find a balance between the joy you derive from chess and the sorrow it obviously gives you?*

'It is difficult to find this balance. After all chess is not only my profession, it's also part of my life. And you only have a very short life. I don't know what I could have reached in music. Of course, I know that I wouldn't have become a world top star like I am in chess, but who knows what's better. But everybody has this problem. We all have different talents and it's probably a matter of luck which of these talents we use for our whole life. When you are in secondary school you are asked this foolish question 'What are you going to be, my dear pupil?' Of course, you don't know, because you're sixteen or seventeen years old. I remember my first day at university. I arrived at the

Karl Marx Polytechnic seven days late, because I had been playing in the Hungarian semi-final and qualified for the Hungarian championship for the first time. I dropped into a two hours' lecture on political economy or something, anyway something foolish and while I was sitting there the four years that lay ahead of me appeared to me and I said to myself 'Oh my God, this is not the kind of thing I want to study for four years.' And I immediately went to the dean and said 'Either you give me a one-year break or I leave the university.' I was lucky, because he didn't grant me the break. This was thirty years ago and I was heavily criticized for taking chess as a profession. I was only a master and chess wasn't so well paid as it is now, when young players can play everywhere in the world. Then it was very difficult to get out of Hungary. Fortunately my parents didn't say anything. They were a bit sorry when I gave up music and started to play chess, but they didn't try to persuade me to do something else. I was playing for a club and I took a small job, something administrative. But still a fulltime job, I had to sit there for eight hours a day. I didn't have any privileges in the very first years, but this changed when I became champion of Hungary. That's why I don't understand Sax, because they were in a much better position than I was at the time. Szabo always says that my generation was much luckier than his, because his best chess years were during the War. My answer to that is that in the fifties, especially from 1950 till '56 it was a terrible time in Hungary, both economically and politically.'

– *How did you experience the Russian invasion in 1956?*

'Maybe chess is the reason that I'm still alive. At that time I was fortunately very busy with Capablanca's games, so I didn't have any political commitment and didn't get into any fighting. I was only eighteen years old, but a lot of youngsters were fighting. It's sad to say that Capablanca's games were more interesting to me than the Hungarian Revolution, but this is how it was.'

– *But how was this among your friends?*

'Well, maybe I was lucky that I had just moved up to Budapest and didn't have so many friends yet. I was living in a very small room and my landlady supplied me with some food. It was very difficult to get food. Most of the fighting took place in Budapest, but not in the district where I was living. But one day I was almost shot. I was walking down a street when suddenly there was a rattle on the pavement behind me. Then I realized there was a tank standing a couple of hundred yards away from me with its gun pointing at me. So this rattle had obviously been bullets from a machine gun. Now either they had shot at random, or it was a warning or they just missed me. I remember I was coolheaded and realizing the danger I didn't run, but calmly walked on. Because had I run I might not have been able to speak now. You never know. Anything could have happened. Just like in Romania now.'

– *Do you also have this detached attitude towards the recent political landslide in Hungary?*

'No, of course not. I follow the political developments and the economic problems. There is real freedom now and I'm glad these changes are taking place. And these problems affect us all. First of all the problem of inflation (laughs). You have to be interested, because what are you going to do with your money? There are a lot of economic problems and I don't know how we can solve them, but we will see.'

– *What are your plans and ambitions as a chess player for the coming ten years?*

'(Another resounding laugh) Thank you. The coming ten years? I just want to play good acceptable chess. I don't want to cause too many problems to myself. I'll probably have to be a little bit less aggressive, which is my nature actually. I'm not such a solid person, I'm too aggressive. Sometimes it's very difficult to direct this aggression in chess. Probably I have to learn to be satisfied with small things, like an occasional small quick draw (laughs). When I was young quick draws used to affect my confidence very much. That's why sometimes at critical moments I had to suffer foolish defeats, because I was trying to win the game at any cost. Even against weak opponents, when I couldn't forget the fact that they were weak players. On the other hand I always tried to play against every opponent as if he were a champion. I always had to take everyone very seriously.'

If Coleridge's Ancient Mariner had been a chess player, I can imagine him exclaiming 'Books, books everywhere, but not a thing to read!' There is no shortage of books on chess, but not all of them – to say the least – are worth reading. During the early 1990s, New In Chess enlisted the help of some of the world's leading players, to identify the chess books they thought were worthy of attention in the 'Check Your Library' interviews. In New In Chess 1990/7, it was the turn of Lev Polugaevsky, himself the author of one of the volumes which appears on nearly everybody's shortlist of all-time greats.

Lev Polugaevsky: 'Karpov became stronger after he had worked with me'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

A frank conversation with Botvinnik in 1969 marked the beginning of Lev Polugaevsky's career as a chess author. Polugaevsky's place among the strongest players in the world was undisputed, but as yet he had not shown any writing ambitions. Botvinnik sternly condemned this omission and rebuked him for his laziness. 'It's the duty of every grandmaster to write books.' Heeding his great example's admonition Polugaevsky set to work and wrote *Grandmaster Preparation*, a book which was instantly acclaimed as a masterpiece by colleagues and critics alike. This debut was followed by *Grandmaster Performance*, a collection of his best games, and a string of opening books. At the end of this year Pergamon will publish his new book, *The Sicilian Labyrinth*, which again promises to be a treat not to be missed.

'When I was young, I had very few books. I lived in Kuibyshev, a city of about one million inhabitants on the river Volga. Kuibyshev didn't have a chess tradition, and, of course, at that time I didn't have any seconds to train with, nor any strong opponents. I studied chess at home and we didn't have many chess books. But there were three books that were very important for me. First of all there was a collection of Chigorin's games. In those days Chigorin was very popular in the Soviet Union. I got this book as a present from Romanovsky (Peter Arsenyevich Romanovsky (1892-1964) - DJtG), a very famous player then, who was one of the founders of chess life in the Soviet Union. He gave it to me after I had taken first prize in a young boys' competition, saying 'Please, this is for you. You must carefully study this book.' It was a very big book with many games. It appealed to me very much because it made me familiar with the style of the old players. I still think that young players should study and know the masters of the past, because if you've never seen the games of Chigorin, Schlechter, Gunsberg or Tarrasch, you cannot become a really strong player.

'Then there were Kotov's books on Alekhine, which I studied diligently, and Botvinnik's *64*

Lev Polugaevsky, whose classic Grandmaster Preparation surely ranks as one of the greatest chess books ever written.

Best Games, one of his earlier books. This book by Botvinnik I studied very fanatically. I even read it before I went to sleep and tried to remember positions. Even now, if you would open this book at random and show me a diagram, I could still tell you the number of the page and of the game. Botvinnik's style suited me down to the ground. I never met many people who said that Botvinnik was their favourite author, but to me he was. To me the logic of chess is very important. I always liked to see Botvinnik's games. Also later, when I went to watch his matches against Smyslov and Petrosian.

'In 1969 I played together with Botvinnik in Belgrade. This was his last tournament. One day we went for a walk together and Botvinnik asked me, 'Have you already tried to write a book?' I said, 'No, I haven't'. And he told me, 'You are very lazy. You should do so.' During the remaining days of the tournament I immediately tried to think of what I could write about. I got a very nice idea and started to write my first book. In Russian it was called *The Birth of a Variation* and in English *Grandmaster Preparation*. I consider it my best book. It's not only about my opening, the Polugaevsky variation, it's also about chess in general. I always say that in every position you should try to find the single best move. Not only in the opening, but also in adjourned games. So, I wrote about my work on my opening, about adjourned games and about how you should prepare for a specific opponent. And I combined these ideas in my book. Everything I wrote in this book derived from my opening preparation and my general preparation between 1960 and 1970. I worked on this book for eight years and it was published in 1977. After this book I published a collection of my best games (published in English by Pergamon as *Grandmaster Performance* – DJtG) and many volumes for the opening series of the East German Sportverlag.

'Right now I've just finished my *magnum opus*, on which I have been working for the past two and a half years. Two volumes, five hundred pages altogether, called *In the Sicilian Labyrinth*. This book deals with all possible aspects of the Sicilian opening. I talk to the reader about my understanding of this opening. I discuss middlegame positions, endings. It can be anything, as long as it comes within the framework of the Sicilian, both from White's viewpoint and from Black's. I talk about good and bad squares, good and bad bishops, about psychological problems, my conclusions about certain positions, anything. And I try to explain why, for instance, a square is strong or weak. Not simply to state, as so many authors do: 'This square is weak', but explain why this is so. But while it's a book about Sicilian variations, it is at the same time a book about all openings. Because certain problems apply to all openings. I give many examples from my own experience and practice.

What happened in my match against Karpov? What happened in my match against Tal? How did I prepare for these matches and what did I think while preparing? What did I think my opponent would think?

'I try to write books that are different from the majority of books you see. Most books you come across are about openings. Only moves and nothing else. And after one month you can throw away these books because they have lost their value. My books are more complicated to write. When I'm playing in tournaments my opponents can often take advantage of my writing activities. These take up so much time that it often influences my play. But I want to write *this* kind of book or none at all. I do not understand grandmasters who produce one book after another. Ninety per cent of all chess books you can open at page one and then immediately close again for ever. Sometimes you see books that have been written in one month. I don't like that. You should take at least two years for a book, or not do it at all. I want to write books you keep opening and keep coming back to. To study them again and to try to understand chess.

'Of course, there also exist some very good books on openings. For example Sveshnikov's book on the Cheliabinsk Variation. There is no better book on this variation and no-one can explain it better than Sveshnikov. Or Bagirov's book on the Alekhine Defence. This is an excellent book and nobody understands this opening better than he does. But then again there are many, many books without any significance whatsoever.

'When I want to write a book, I take one month to find a suitable subject to write about. And if I don't get an idea, I won't begin. The only person I have in mind is the reader, a player who wants to become a stronger chess player. That's all that matters to me. I prefer books in which an author's own, individual style is manifest. Books in which I can find something I've never seen before. One of the best such books I know, for example, is Keres' book on the 1948 World Championship Tournament. Yes, a fantastic book. And also Bronstein's book on the Candidates Tournament in 1953. One of the best books I know. Another book I liked very much was Botvinnik's book on the revenge match Alekhine-Bogoljubow. High quality analysis. And everything Kasparov or Karpov publishes I read with great interest. When Kasparov published his book (*The Test of Time* – DJtG) I studied it very carefully.

'If you've never seen the games of Chigorin, Schlechter, Gunsberg or Tarrasch, you cannot become a really strong player.'

'No, I never thought about writing tournament books. I like to express myself and enter into a conversation with the reader. 'Why was this a mistake?', 'What was the alternative?', etcetera. Now, why have I always preferred this approach? You know, for many years I had a chess school here in Moscow. Also, I was often invited to holiday camps to give advice to young boys and girls. I always used this method with my pupils and already after a very short time I would see that this method worked and that they began to think differently. The idea that this was the right method was strengthened by the experiences I had with my seconds over the years. All players who were my seconds when I played matches in the world championship cycle ten years ago, became stronger afterwards. Bagirov, Tseshkovsky, Sveshnikov. And I also saw that Karpov became stronger after he had worked with me before his match with Kortchnoi. For example, Tseshkovsky became champion of our country, Bagirov became a grandmaster, and Sveshnikov had big successes as well. I don't have an explanation, but maybe it's my chess intelligence that they like.

'My chess method is without formulas, without orthodox thinking, without any special schemes. My method is purely based on dynamic thinking. I always explain that chess is an art and that there are no definite judgments. I approach my pupils or my readers as partners. I try to understand what they think and tell them: 'Maybe this is so, maybe it isn't.' But I never give any one hundred per cent guarantees. Sometimes something can be good, sometimes it's bad. I refuse to see chess as a computer science, although I know that some trainers have good results with this approach. I know that you can have good results with these exact methods with graphs and things, but I also know that you will never score really great results that way. Never. If you insist on seeing chess as a perfect entity, e.g. like an egg, you will never find a way to improve your results when something goes wrong and you have a bad result. This, in my opinion, is the reason why old players like Smyslov or Kortchnoi can still have very good results. They have never locked themselves up in this egg, but have tried to remain dynamic. Without formulas or unshakeable truths. Of course, it's important to work with computers. Of course, it's important to study openings. But this is not everything. Sometimes, please, allow yourself a little time to rest and to play chess in tournaments.'

We all know one. The player who ignores mainstream opening theory, and plays all kinds of 'absurd rubbish', which cannot possibly be sound. And yet he wins. Every country has one. Germany has Stefan Bücker. Sweden had the late Rolf Martens. And in Britain we have Michael Basman. What makes these guys tick? In New In Chess 1991/4, Hans Ree attempted to get to the bottom of the phenomenon, in a highly perceptive review of Basman's latest book.

'The Killer Grob'

Hans Ree

'Basmania' is what the Brits call Michael Basman's maniacal opening experiments. Basman's book 'The Killer Grob' has just come out. The Grob opening 1.g4 for White and 1...g5 for Black, or even crazier, 1...h6 and 2...g5 – does Basman really believe these moves are killing or does he want to play with a handicap? Hans Ree perused 'The Killer Grob' and played through some astonishing and enchanting games. But at the heart of darkness of Basmania he found a monster he thinks he recognizes: Helpless Irony.

At the VSB tournament held at Amsterdam in May there was a stand selling chess books. At the end of the tournament I enquired whether business had been good. Better than ever, was the reply. The book that had sold like hot cakes and had had to be re-ordered post-haste from the publisher's, Pergamon, was *The Killer Grob* by Michael Basman. I wondered about people's motives for buying the book. Basman writes: 'When you play the Grob each game is a marvellous adventure, a trip into uncharted territory.' Were there so many adventurers among the spectators? Probably not. I think most buyers were hoping they would find the unknown territory conveniently charted for them. They were looking for something they could surprise their opponents with at the club. They wanted to copy Basman's originality and use it to get a quick win. And it cannot be denied that Basman mightily encourages those who are out for this. He describes his game against Cebalo which begins in a very ordinary way (at least for White) 1.c4 g5 2.d4 h6 3.♘c3 d6 4.g3 as follows: '...1.c4 guarantees White a difficult game after 1...g5, and his later weakening move 4.g3 guarantees the loss.' Further on he discusses his new system for Black. 1.e4 h6 2.d4 a6. Many orthodox players would consider Black already virtually lost. But not Basman. On the contrary. He writes: 'Consider the schizophrenia that develops in White's mind as he surveys the board' and he goes on to explain why White is already in great trouble. The white king is in grave danger. As a result of his first two moves he cannot remain in the centre and if he seeks refuge on one of the flanks Black has already, with his own earlier moves, prepared the ground for a crushing attack.

You can see many a chess player rubbing his hands with glee at the thought of an unsuspecting White opponent being so easily led into trouble. He's in for a disappointment of course. Julius Breyer noted roundabout 1920: 'After the first move 1.e4 White's game is in its last throes.' Still, since then quite a few games with this move have been won. Anyone who tries to copy Basman's originality will come to grief. Naturally Basman knows this and I suspect that's what he's after.

The question you can't get away from when reading *The Killer Grob* is whether Basman really means what he says. Ten years ago Chandler and Keene, the authors of *The English Chess Explosion*, came up against the same problem. Basman's commentary on the Speelman-Basman 1980 British Championship match: 'This is to bust the position open and tear his king limb from limb' (after 1.e4 g5 2.d4 h6 3.gh4 4.♖h4 d5), made-them ask: 'This is the way he talks: Is it the way he thinks?'

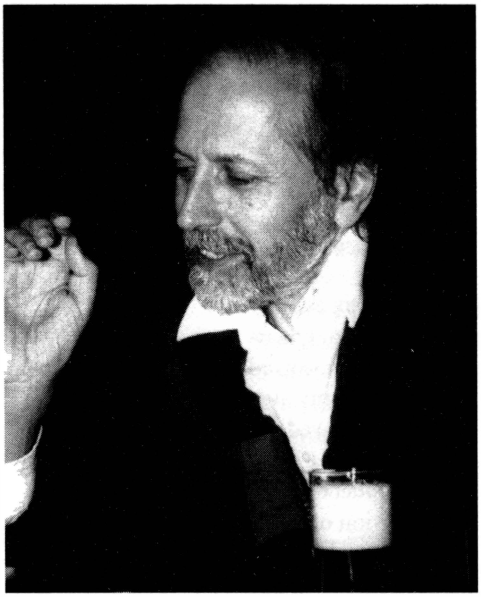
What would Basman have had to say to this? His reply would probably have been about as ambiguous as his chess commentary, something like – if it was Friday – I always tell the truth on Saturday. He has become an ironist. Every word he writes conveys the message: I mean it, but at the same time I don't. This also goes for his chess moves (in the opening, that is, eventually he has to checkmate and that is not an ironic move). Implicit in his moves is the comment: I'm serious but then again I'm not. The chess world, having recovered from its initial bemusement, decided that Basman's systems did have to be taken seriously. He then had to think of something else. First it was the Saint George's Defence, 1...a6 and 2...b5; then the Grob, 1...g5; and nowadays it's the De Klerk opening, 1...h6 and 2...a6. From bad to worse, a conventional chess player would say. Where will it end? Perhaps 1...h5, 2...h4, 3...h3, 'to tear his king limb from limb.'

It's a real pleasure to play through Basman's games from *The Killer Grob*. And it's true that every game is an adventure into unknown territory. This is the adventure that every chess player remembers from his first games when he could still hardly play. The exploration continues but it is less alluring because by now the adventurer in wonderland is loaded with travel guides. One observes that Basman's unorthodox play is backed up by orthodox virtues. A sharp sense for positional play, patience, good technique in the endgame, and tactical resourcefulness. The difference between Basman and other chess players specializing in perverse openings is that he really has enormous talent.

He was once the best chess player in England. I first saw him in the national junior championships in The Hague more than twenty-five years ago and was very impressed by his originality. His ideas were not as extreme then as they are now. He played common openings in an uncommon way. A couple of years later in the 1966/67 Hastings Tournament he tied for third place. Botvinnik was positionally outplayed, escaped with a lucky draw and said that Basman was one of the most unusually gifted of the British players and that he reminded him very much of Simagin. In 1968 at the tournament in Netanya, Israel, at which Fischer also played, I saw an unsuspected side of Basman. It turned out that he was an Armenian and had a large number of relatives – cousins, aunts and uncles – living in the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem. Shortly after he went to live in Yerevan and became champion there. When he returned to England another great success awaited him: equal first with Hartston in the British Championship of 1973. After that something went wrong with his chess career. He still played astonishing games but without astonishing tournament results. Was this because of his outrageous openings or was the outrageousness due to his lack of success? I tend to think the latter. If you open with 1...h6 you give yourself a handicap. In a way you opt out of the competition. You might lose but at least you have the satisfaction of knowing that you've been original. Sometimes you win gloriously and inimitably. Everyone wonders how well you might have done if you didn't handicap yourself with those freaky openings. There's no answering that, of course. And perhaps Basman prefers it this way because an answer might be disappointing.

The language of chess commentary is notoriously aggressive. Chess players are 'destroyed' or 'hacked to pieces.' But Basman's verbal aggression tops the lot: 'Tear his king limb from limb,' 'Clubbed to death,' 'Right on the nose!', 'Here comes the chopper to chop off your head.' He jokes about 'Gentleman Jim' (Plaskett) and one of his sections is headed 'Taulbut-Shaun takes a job as an accountant.' I quote: 'Though the exchange down, the time scramble gave Black drawing opportunities which were missed. The rest of the game was unrecorded but the result was the same. A few months later Shaun abandoned his attempts to become a professional chess player and took up a career in accountancy instead.' Triumph. Basman himself is still a professional. Perhaps not in the way he had envisaged, though. He's actually more of a businessman than a chess player, but at least he's still playing. All the same, I think I detect in his extremely sadistic language the bitterness of one for whom Botvinnik predicted a brilliant career which never materialized. And I detect this bitterness not only in his words but also in his chess moves – however playful they might look.

Stop! What am I doing? What do I know about it? I've hardly spoken to Basman for the last twenty years and I'm always the first to ridicule when someone starts playing the psychologist on the strength of chess moves.



IM Michael Basman, still dodging an international arrest warrant for crimes against chess orthodoxy.

I know it's projection on my part to see Basman's outrageousness as a way of opting out. I myself have opted out. I haven't played a serious game for the last year. I don't like the chess world as much as I used to. Too many chess players have died in recent years in Holland. FIDE has prohibited smoking. There's no defence against the Keres Attack. And what I particularly dislike is that I used to play against world champions and I now lose to brats whose names I hardly know or care to know. I'll soon be playing in another tournament, and if it doesn't go well I can tell myself that it doesn't matter because I'm only a chess tourist and haven't trained and don't study openings any more, and this will spare me the question as to how I'd have played if I had done all these things. I can write an ironic article about my tournament if it goes badly, in fact I probably will, and maybe it's only because I'm not pleased with this state of affairs that I tend to see Basman's openings as the irony of someone who's disillusioned and now wants to opt out of real competition. Don't take any notice of me. Just enjoy the lovely games in *The Killer Grob.*

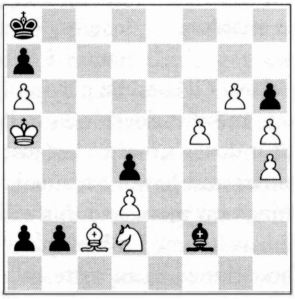
New In Chess has always been a magazine primarily about over the board chess, but it has never neglected other aspects of chess, most notably the endgame study. Unlike problems, which tend to be a world of their own, studies have a close and integral connection with the game, and almost all strong players have at least some appreciation of the endgame study. Jan Timman has frequently written about studies in his New In Chess articles, but here we present a beautiful article by ex-world champion Vasily Smyslov, who has become a prolific composer of studies in recent years.

My Collected Studies

Vasily Smyslov

Since my youth I have taken a great interest in studies - not only did I solve them, I composed them as well. This interest has served me well: it helped the development of my aesthetic understanding of chess and improved my endgame.

Not so long ago I got the idea to collect all my compositions together. This collection of studies is now presented to the reader. I have arranged them in chronological order.

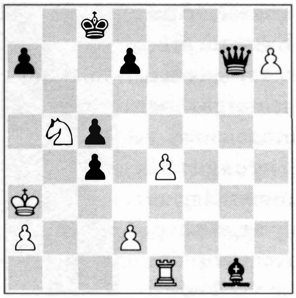


V.Smyslov 1936

Win

1.♗b1! a1♕+ 2.♔b5 ♗g3! 3.g7 ♗b8! 4.g8♗! ♗f4 5.♗ga2! ♗xd2 6.f6 ♗f4 7.f7 ♗d6 8.♔c6 ♗f8 9.♔c7

and ♗d5 mate is inevitable.



V.Smyslov 1936

Win

1.♘d6+ ♔b8

Otherwise the queen is lost: 1...♔c7 2.♘e8+; 1...♔d8 2.h8♕+ ♕xh8 3.♘f7+.

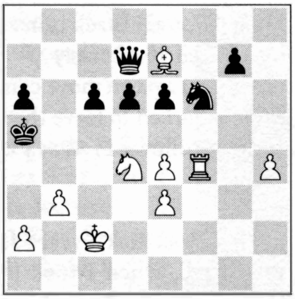
2.♖b1+ ♔a8 3.♘e8 ♕g3+ 4.♔a4 ♗d4

It seems as if White has run out of resources, but

5.e5!

and mate will follow: 5...♗xe5 6.♘c7+ ♗xc7 7.h8♕+, or 5...♕xe5 6.h8♕ ♕xh8 7.♘c7+ mate.

In this study the so-called Plachutta theme is realized, which is more typical of a problem composition. The idea is that White makes a sacrifice (in this case a pawn) at the point of intersection of two of his opponent's long-distance pieces. If the sacrifice is accepted the range of activity of these pieces is decreased; one of them is distracted and Black loses.



V.Smyslov 1937
Win

The following study consists essentially of a combination of many moves, involving some sacrifices.

1.♗d8+ ♔b4 2.a3+!!

2.♗b6 seems dangerous, but the reply 2...e5 deprives White of his winning hopes.

2...♔c5

If the pawn sacrifice is accepted, the black king ends up in a mating net: 2...♔xa3 3.♖f1, threatening 4.♖a1+ ♔b4 5.♖a4+ ♔c5 6.♖c4 mate. If 3...♔b4, then 4.♖a1 ♘xe4 (4... c5 5.♗a5+ mate; 4... d5 5.♗b6 does not change anything) 5.♖a4+ ♔c5 6.♖a5+ ♔b4 7.♔b2! and there is no defence against 8.♘c2 mate: 7...♕xd8 8.♘xc6+ mate.

The last try is 3...♔a2: 4.♘e2 ♘xe4 (4...♕xd8 5.♘c1+ ♔a3 6.♘d3 ♔a2 7.♘b4+ ♔a3 8.♘xc6) 5.♘c1+ ♔a3 6.♘d3 ♔a2 7.♘b4+ ♔a3 8.♗a5, with inevitable mate.

3.♖xf6!

White is left with only two minor pieces, but this is fully sufficient.

3...gxf6 4.♔c3 d5 5.e5! fxe5 6.♗c7! ♕xc7

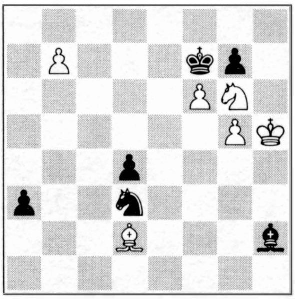
6...exd4+ 7.exd4+ ♔b5 8.a4+ mate. Black has eliminated all white pieces, so he doesn't mind giving his queen, but after

7.♘xe6+ ♔d6 8.♘xc7 ♔xc7

although the material balance has been restored, the outside passed pawn decides.

9.h5

and the black king does not reach the quadrant in time.



V.Smyslov 1937
Draw

1.♘h8+ ♔g8

If 1...♔f8 2.♘g6+, then 2...♔e8 3.fxg7 ♔f7 4.♔h6 loses, but 2...♔g8 leads to a simple draw: 3.♘e7+ ♔f7 4.fxg7 ♔xg7 5.♘f5+ and 6.♘d4. So Black is forced to repeat the position with 2...♔f7.

2.f7+ ♔f8 3.♔g6! a2 4.♔h7! a1♕ 5.g6!

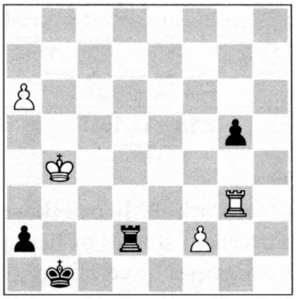
Three concealed moves, and the frightful threat 6.♗h6 is imminent.

5...♕h1 6.♗h6!

Even so!

6...♗f4 7.b8♕+ ♗xb8

Stalemate with a knight which has been boxed in and a pinned bishop, so both pieces have ended up on the right spot in the course of a clever battle. A normal initial position and a highly unusual finish.

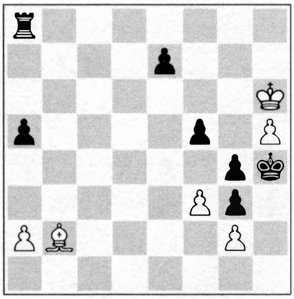


V.Smyslov 1938
Draw

1.♖g1+ ♔b2 2.f4! gxf4 3.a7 ♖d4+ 4.♔b5 ♖d8 5.♖g2+ ♔b3 6.♖g1 f3 7.♖f1 f2 8.♔b6 ♔c3 9.♔b7 ♔d3 10.♖a1 ♔c3 11.♖f1 ♔d3 12.♖a1

A positional draw - the black king is unable to help one of his pawns.

A study that serves as a valuable example for both theory and practice.



V.Smyslov 1938
Draw

Probably my most popular study.

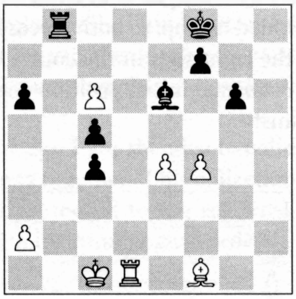
1.♗f6+! exf6 2.f4 ♖h8+ 3.♔g7! 3.♔g6 is insufficient: 3...♖xh5 4.♔g7 ♖g5+ 5.♔h8 ♔h5 6.♔h7 ♖g6 hoping to draw with 7.a3. But after 7...♖h6+ 8.♔g7 a4! Black comes out on top.

3...♖xh5 4.a4 ♖g5+ 5.♔h8!

5.♔h7? ♔h5! and wins.

5...♖g6 6.♔h7 ♔h5 7.♔h8 ♖h6+ 8.♔g7 ♖g6+ 9.♔h8 The black rook is unable to free itself.

9...♔h6 Stalemate.



V.Smyslov 1938
Win

Contrary to the work of Mikhail Botvinnik, who created his excellent studies by basing them on his adjourned games or certain positions, the majority of my studies arose out of sudden inspirations - you might say that in this respect I am no different from musical composers. This example, by the way, is an exception to that rule; a similar position arose in one of my games, and with some small changes I adapted it into a study.

1.f5 gxf5 2.♗h3 ♖e8 After 2...♖c8 3.exf5 Black's bishop is caught, so that the rook is unable to attack the pawn. **3.exf5** 3.c7 is too early in view of 3...♗c8 4.♗xf5 ♔e7, or 4.exf5 f6, and Black is saved.

3...♗c8 4.f6! ♗xh3 5.c7 a5 6.♖d8

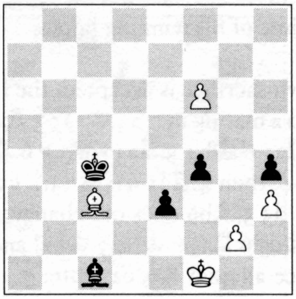
A move with the a-pawn must be held in reserve; after 6.a4 ♔g8 7.♖d8 ♖f8 8.♔c2 ♗g4 9.♔c3 ♗e6 White has obtained nothing.

6...a4 7.♔b2 ♗e6 8.♔c2! Black is in zugzwang.

8...♗f5+ 9.♔c3 ♗e6 10.a3 ♗any

This is when the extra pawn move comes in useful. The bishop is forced to leave the square e6, after which there follows 11.♔xc4 and White wins.

Now we move almost forty years forward in time. In April 1976, when I took part in the team competition for the USSR Cup in Tbilisi, I met the well-known Georgian study composer G.Nadareishvili. When I got to know this remarkable person I remembered my early years and started to compose again... Soon two twin studies were made, which I dedicated to Nadareishvili.



V.Smyslov 1976
Win

1.f7!

1.♗b4 fails to win because of 1...♔d3 2.♔e1 (2.f7 ♗d2) 2...f3 3.gxf3 e2 4.f7 ♗f4, or 1.♗e1 ♔d3 2.♗xh4 ♔d2 3.♗e1+ ♔d1 4.f7 ♗a3 5.♗c3 ♗c5! and Black saves himself.

1...♗a3 2.♗g7

Not wasting time with 2.♗b2 ♗f8 3.♔e2 ♔d5 4.♗f6 ♔e6 5.♗xh4 ♔xf7 with a draw.

2...f3!

Black is conducting a clever defence, pinning his hopes on a stalemate trick.

3.gxf3

Not, of course 3.f8♕ ♗xf8 4.♗xf8 e2+ 5.♔e1 fxg2 and Black comes out on top.

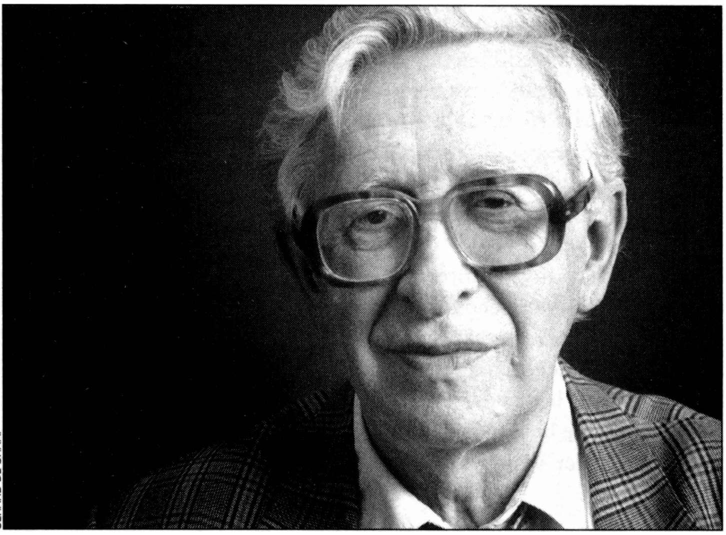
3...♔d3 4.f8♗

A minor promotion always adorns the whole idea. The continuation 4.f8♕ e2+ 5.♔f2 (5.♔e1 ♗xf8 6.♗xf8 ♔e3 and the king reaches the pawn) 5...♗c5+! 6.♕xc5 e1♕+! 7.♔xe1 leads to stalemate.

4...e2+

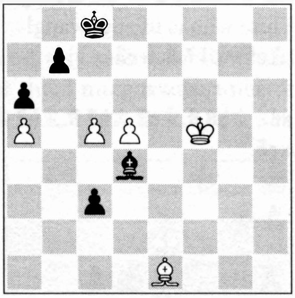
If 4...♗c1, then 5.♗h6 ♗d2 6.♔g2 ♗e1 7.♗c5 e2 8.♗f2 is decisive.

5.♔f2 e1♕+ 6.♔xe1 ♔e3 7.f4! ♔xf4 8.♔f2 ♗c1 9.♗h6+ And the battle between three bishops of the same colour ends in White's favour.



GERARD DE GRAAF

As his playing career has wound down, so Vassily Smyslov has become a prolific endgame study composer.



V.Smyslov 1976

Draw

A popular means of composing a twin study is by not only changing the colour of the pieces, but also the task.

1.c6!

1.♔e6 is insufficient: 1...c2 2.d6 c1♕ 3.d7+ ♔c7 4.♗g3+ ♔c6 5.d8♕ ♕c4+ 6.♔f5 ♕d5+, and White is defenceless.

1...c2

If 1...bxc6, then 2.♔e6 cxd5 3.♔xd5 c2 4.♗d2 ♗b2 5.♔c6.

2.♗d2 ♗b2 3.d6! bxc6 4.♔e6

Now after 4...c1♕ the well-known stalemate finish from the former study arises: 5.d7+ ♔c7! 6.♗f4+! ♕xf4 7.d8♕+! ♔xd8, stalemate.

4...c1♗! 5.d7+ ♔c7 6.d8♕+ ♔xd8 7.♔d6 c5!

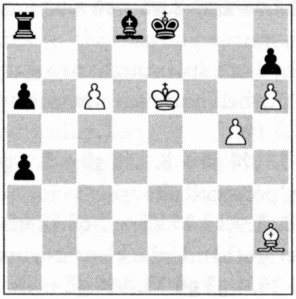
Up to now everything is as in the first study, but how does White manage to draw?

8.♔xc5 ♔c7 9.♗e1!

This is it; in the analogous situation in the first study the bishop was not on d2 but on h6, and it could not escape, whereas now it can save itself on e1. The white king will go to a2, where it cannot be driven away. Black wins the a-pawn, but cannot catch the white bishop with his two same coloured bishops.

At first sight both positions seem normal bishop endings (with three pawns against three), but the number of possibilities turns out to be considerably greater.

In a very laconic form more study ideas are embodied at once.



V.Smyslov 1986

Win

1986 in Dubai was probably my first time at a tournament as a guest (of the Olympiad) rather than as a participant or trainer! My only task was to help produce the bulletin, which was edited by IM Wade. This left me a lot of spare time, and I managed to compose a new study.

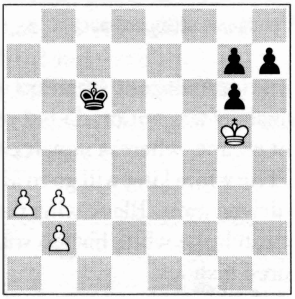
1.g6! hxg6 2.h7 ♗f6 3.♗b8!!

Preventing queenside castling; after 3.♔xf6 0-0-0 it is a draw.

3...♖xb8 4.♔xf6 ♔d8 5.h8♕+ ♔c7 6.♕h2+!

And White wins.

The echo-variation is interesting: 1...♗b6 2.♗b8!, etc. Here queenside castling must not be allowed either: 2.g7 0-0-0 3.♗d6 ♖g8 4.♔f7 ♗e3!. Now Black manages to give his bishop for the g- and h-pawns, and with the help of a4-a3 the white bishop is driven away from the square c7, after which the last white pawn is lost.



G.Nadareishvili / V.Smyslov 1986
Win

The authors called the following joint study 'Chess clock'. The initial position does not give rise to associations with a clock, although still with chess.

1.b4! ♔b5 2.b3 ♔b6 3.a4 ♔c6 4.b5+ ♔c5 5.b4+ ♔b6

The white pawns are brought to a standstill, the 'clock' is pushed and movement starts on the other 'clock face'.

6.♔g4 h6 7.♔f4 g5+ 8.♔f5 g6+ 9.♔g4

Again the 'pointers' change.

9...♔b7 10.a5 ♔c7 11.b6+ ♔c6 12.b5+ ♔b7

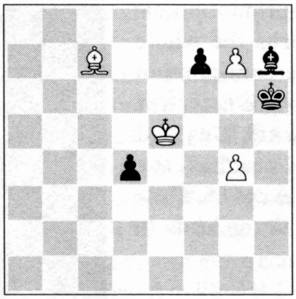
Again the righthand 'clock' starts running.

13.♔f3 h5 14.♔g3 g4 15.♔f4 g5+ 16.♔g3

And now the lefthand side.

16...♔b8 17.a6 ♔c8 18.b7+ ♔c7 19.b6+ ♔b8 20.♔g2 h4 21.♔f2 g3+ 22.♔f3 g4+ 23.♔g2 h3+ 24.♔xg3

And the flag falls! The clocks have been ticking through the entire game...



V.Smyslov 1987
Win

1.g8♘+!

Other promotions allow Black to escape with the intermediate 1...f6!

1...♗xg8

After 1...♔g6 2.♘f6 White has a very simple win.

2.♔f6 ♔h7 3.g5 d3 4.♗f4!

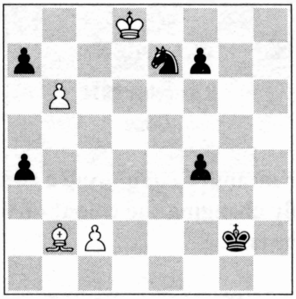
But not 4.♗a5 because of 4...♔h8 5.♗c3 ♔h7, and it is White who is in zugzwang!

4...♔h8 5.♗e5! ♔h7 6.♗c3

Now Black is in zugzwang.

6...d2 7.♗xd2 ♔h8 8.♗c3 ♔h7 9.♗b2 ♔h8 10.g6 fxg6 11.♔xg6

Mate.



V.Smyslov 1987
Draw

This study is the last one I managed to compose to date. I remember the exact day when this was created, 28th September 1987. I am, however, not so sure that readers will get a lot of satisfaction from the solution - the study belongs to the group of so-called 'analytical problems' and requires an accurate analysis. It lacks unexpected effects.

1.b7 ♘c6+ 2.♔c7 ♘b4 3.♔b8!

Otherwise 3...♘a6+, and White has no defence.

3...f3 4.♗d4!

4.♔xa7 f2 5.♔b6 ♘a6! is insufficient.

4...a3 5.♔xa7 f2 6.♗xf2 ♔xf2 7.♔b6 ♘a6!

In this situation the knight manoeuvre is no longer so dangerous for White.

8.♔xa6 a2 9.b8♕ a1♕+ 10.♔b7 ♕b2+ 11.♔a8 ♕xb8+ 12.♔xb8 ♔e3

It seems that White's efforts will not be crowned with success, but now a popular manoeuvre Réti-style comes to the rescue.

13.♔c7!

The king approaches the enemy pawn, at the same time intending to support his own.

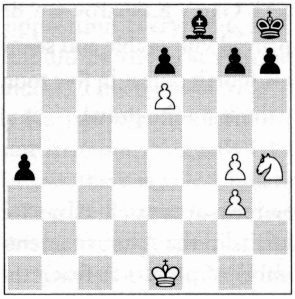
13...f5 14.c4! ♔d4 15.♔d6! ♔xc4

Otherwise both pawns queen at the same time.

16.♔e5 f4 17.♔xf4

And only the two kings remain on the board.
This study was first published in an Italian chess magazine, and I had dedicated it to the well-known Italian master Enrico Paoli for his 80th birthday.

We will end this serious article with a comic study. For this I must return to my early years again.



V.Smyslov 1936
Win

1.♘g6+ hxg6 2.g5!

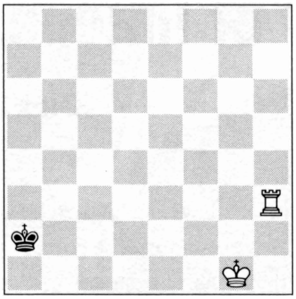
Now Black's kingside is blocked; but how to deal with the rook's pawn?

2...a3 3.0-0-0!

This is it - White castles queenside, only moving the king to cl. As regards rook a1, it had been given as odds!

How does the game proceed? The white king takes the a-pawn and goes to e8. The black king has only three squares in the corner of the board and manoeuvres in such a way that he can answer ♔e8 with ♔g8. At that point White finally uses his g-pawn, which has remained in its place until then. There follows g3-g4!, and Black loses the bishop.

I must add that when I showed this joke to master Evgeny Gik, he surprised me with the following position



K.Fabel 1949
White takes back his last move
and mates in two

It is hard to guess that White's last move was... castling kingside, in which only the king participated, moving from e1 to g1. It turns out that this time White played the game with odds of two rooks, and the rook on h3 is a promoted pawn. Instead of castling kingside White now castles queenside, so that the king does not end up on gl but on cl (rook a1, like rook hl, only participates in the castling manoeuvre symbolically). So after 1.0-0-0! the black king is forced to go into the corner with 1...♔a1, where he is mated with 2.♖a3.

Yes, the author of this joke showed a great sense of humour, but my earlier composition has one advantage: you can see that it was made by a practical chess player...

The current world champion, Vishy Anand, has played his entire career under the watchful eye of New In Chess. In 1992, he won his first super-GM tournament, beating Kasparov in the process. It seemed like, and indeed proved to be, the start of a new era. Needless to say, New In Chess was there to see it all happen and to speak to the new star.

Anand baffles Commonwealth of Independent Chess Stars

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

The 34th Torneo Scacchistico di Capodanno in Reggio Emilia not only marked the beginning of the new year, but maybe equally the start of a new era. Seemingly without exerting himself Viswanathan Anand bested world champion Kasparov to win the first category 18 tournament ever. The inimitable style of the elusive Indian proved too much for a field that, besides the 'ragazzo Indiano', only consisted of first-class former Soviets. Garry Kasparov saw his come-back tour rudely interrupted. The World Champion again proved vulnerable and seems to be in need of a quiet period of reflection and preparation. After his fourth defeat in five tournaments he knows that it is not only the Indian tiger who is on the prowl.

The 34rd Reggio Emilia New Year's tournament was proudly billed as 'the strongest chess manifestation of all time'. It is no secret that the Reggio organizers are quite obsessed with categories. Ten years ago Dr Elio Monducci of the Banco San Geminiano e San Prospero persuaded Dr Enrico Paoli, the grand old man of Reggio Emilian chess and the indefatigable driving force behind the Reggio tournaments, to carry on his good work. After the 25th jubilee tournament the then 75-year-old Dr Paoli was of the opinion that as a chess organizer it was time to call it a day. Dr Monducci revived his organizing ambitions by providing the funds for a Category-IX tournament. In the following years it became clear that Dr Monducci might not know much about chess, but quite a lot about categories. Every year he aspired to a higher one, even if this necessitated emergency measures such as no longer having any Italians in the A-tournament or reducing the number of players to reach the category desired.

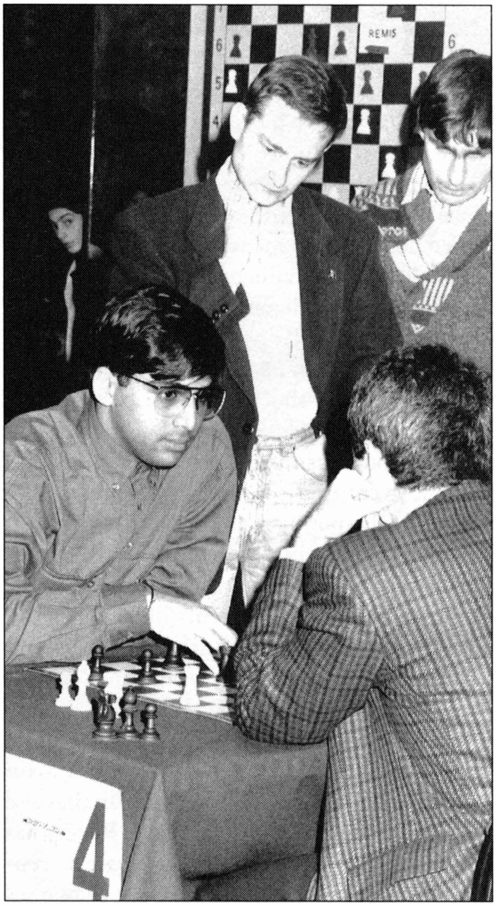
Last year's tournament provided a classic example of the lengths the Reggio organizers are willing to go to in order to score a high category. Magnanimously they allowed Anatoly Karpov a few days to recover from his gruelling world championship match and had the first round in early January. Then they made the shocking discovery that as a result of their lenience the new Elo-list, on which several of their participants had shed precious points, applied to their tournament. The solution was as simple as it was drastic. Instead of one big A-tournament there were to be two seven-player double-rounders. Needless to say, the first group made category 16 as per plan.

This year Mr Monducci proceeded in a much more straightforward fashion. Hoping to stage the strongest tournament ever, in a Elo-mathematical sense that is, he began to invite the leading ten players in the world. In the end ten out of the world's top fourteen agreed to play, an admirable feat that guaranteed the unprecedented category 18. And you can be sure they did not make the same mistake of starting the tournament in January, when the new Elo-list would have left them with a meagre category 17 (on average 3(!) points short of category 18). Mr. Monducci and his merry men were understandably eager to exploit this record category for publicity purposes. Many Italian newspapers sent special reporters, including the nation's biggest sports daily *La Gazetta dello Sport*, whose man on the spot avowed to know nothing about chess, but nevertheless was most curious about Anand's favourite piece.

Playing conditions

The players were less enthusiastic about this Elo-madness. As Valery Salov pointed out, 'You get the feeling that you're playing against the same opposition every time, so I don't see why this should be the best tournament. It's just arithmetic.' This point of view was shared by Anatoly Karpov who furthermore could not conceal some irritation. 'Actually I don't understand this. First, there is a clear inflation of Elo-ratings. Secondly I have always been against these tournament categories. I think it's very bad when organizers, because of this category they want to have, only invite former Soviet players, players from one country, plus Anand.'

Garry Kasparov, too, agreed that 'These were just the same people, but with this inflation of Elo the category just grows'. Apart from that the World Champion was first and foremost appalled by the playing conditions and the fact that a nine-round tournament of this strength had been squeezed into eleven days. 'This was supposed to be the strongest tournament ever and there were appalling conditions. First I was shocked. They had the drawing of lots two hours before the first round. They have this opening ceremony in the morning. Everyone with their long speeches. Then the drawing of lots and two hours later you have to play. After the first game, which I won, so it had nothing to do with the result, I said to Palladino (the President of the Italian Chess Federation - DJtG), 'It looks to me as if Fischer never entered chess'. The quality of the chess pieces (plastic ones – DJtG). The light the first day was unbelievable. And then a toilet to be shared with the public, so that you had to wait all the time. They have had so many tournaments here. But they haven't upgraded one of their tournaments. They just squeezed the top tournament into their other tournaments. They don't have any respect for the top players. Fischer would not even have entered this room, he would have left immediately. Here you have a lack of motivation to play. It's like a zoo. Just top names, and they don't care about the quality of the chess.'


Reggio Emilia, 1991/92, the start of a new era. A bespectacled Anand analyses with Kasparov, whilst Salov and Ivanchuk look on.

Kasparov's righteous anger may have been clouded to a certain extent by his disappointment, but the essence of his criticism was absolutely correct. For a tournament of this strength there were far too many details, seemingly unimportant to the layman, but of great importance to a professional chess player, that had received no or only scant attention.

But despite the railing against Elomania and organizational negligence we should not forget that this strongest Reggio tournament ever was a most memorable occasion. Ignoring the already mentioned shortcomings it must be said that the Banco S. Geminiano e S. Prospero and their co-sponsors made a great effort to stage a media event that could be a valuable contribution to the popularization of chess in Italy. Running concurrently with the A and B tournaments were an international tournament for the blind, and several side-events like a forum on chess in the twentieth century in which all living ex-World Champions except for Mikhail Tal, who arrived one day later, and Bobby Fischer took part.

But the most gratifying aspect of the main tournament was, of course, the unabashed fighting spirit. For quite some years Reggio has (partly rightly) suffered under its peaceful reputation. Elo's were more important than ones and zeroes, and many a highly-rated grandmaster knew that on his arrival his mission was largely accomplished. The sponsor had his category and never kicked up too much against short draws. Perhaps that was one of the reasons why, until last year, there were never many spectators in the tournament hall. This year such peacefulness was out of the question for the simple reason that today's world top is unusually uncompromising and competitive. In today's top chess extreme cautiousness does not get you anywhere, but ferocious headbanging might.

Indian boy

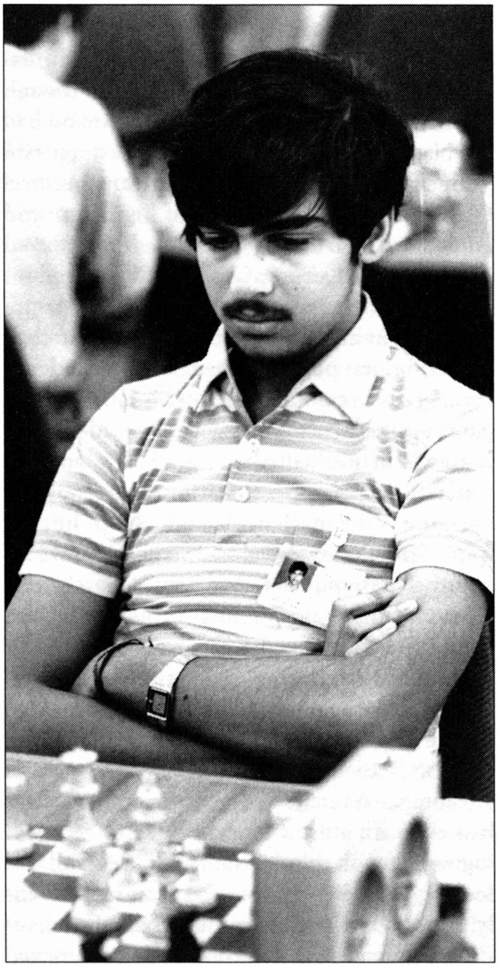
A line-up of nine citizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States and one Indian may not appeal to everyone's tastes. The first one to harbour some distinct doubts about the attraction of such a tournament must have been Anand himself. As he explained, these doubts soon evaporated and at the end of the tournament they had, of course, been replaced by sheer delight. Anand did not want to gloat over his victory too much, but certainly found pleasure in the praises that compared his routing of nine ex-Soviets to Bobby Fischer's legendary achievements in this domain. As I watched the games in Reggio there were two lines that kept popping up in my head. One was from an article in *The Economist* on the impending end of the Soviet chess empire, that read, '(The Soviet chess masters) are perhaps the only Soviet products that can compete in a world market'. The other line was a heading in the newly founded Italian quality paper *L'Indipendente*, saying 'Indian boy throws last remains of USSR primacy into crisis.'

Now it's difficult to foretell how quickly the Soviet supremacy in chess will crumble, and equally difficult to assess Anand's chances for the world title in 1996, but there cannot be any doubt that fascinating developments are taking place, which may well upset the existing order on the chess Olympus. After ten years of almost total superiority Kasparov has won only one out of his last five tournaments. Even more remarkably he has had to give way to five different players. Ivanchuk in Linares, Short and Salov in Amsterdam, Timman in Paris, and now Anand in Reggio. The funny thing with Anand is that among the experts there is absolutely no consensus about his true potential. His results are impressive and he may have beaten the World Champion twice in a row (total score 2½-1½ in Anand's favour) but for many it is difficult to believe that someone who plays so easily and so loosely can be made of the stuff that World Champions are made of. Mikhail Tal gets twinkling eyes when he talks about Anand's formidable talent, but Anatoly Karpov cannot get too excited. 'He is very talented and this was a great success, but I still don't see a future World Champion in him'. Kasparov connects Anand's successes with the new time-schedule. 'He's made reasonable progress, yes, and he's stable. I told you in Tilburg that it's a new type of play, which is very promising with the new time-control and when you're playing many tournaments. It's not deep. In a match it would be quite easy to get him trapped in different openings. But he's got a good knowledge of chess, he follows it, he's working.' These reservations were certainly not shared by the Italian spectators and the Italian press. With growing enthusiasm they followed Vishy's campaign against the awe-inspiring former Soviet rest and were absolutely delighted that of all the chess stars present he was the most accessible one. In *La Gazetta dello Sport* he was described as the player 'who with his leather jacket and his tennis shoes has broken with the eternal chess tradition of grey suits and black shoes.'(!?)

Kasparov-Anand

Anand opened the tournament in a sweeping manner. First he beat Salov in a way which made Kasparov remark to his friend Gurevich, 'He's doing much better now. He's quiet.' Then the World Champion found out how right he had been. In Round 2 Anand got a pleasant game when Kasparov uncharacteristically steered clear of theory as early as move five. Still looking for an advantage Kasparov stirred up complications, but it soon became clear that these suited Anand better. When the dust had settled Anand had reached a winning advantage.

In Round 3 Kasparov regained a good deal of his self-confidence in yet another epic Karpov-Kasparov clash. Their 160th encounter drew some 700 spectators to the Grand Hotel Astoria. With some 200 spectators the playing hall was filled to capacity. The others patiently awaited their turn to see the two K's in a packed lobby. After Kasparov had won the opening battle, both players missed good chances to decide the game in their favour. Finally when Kasparov traded queens (Gurevich: 'The young Kasparov would not even have thought of the idea of exchanging queens'), his two extra pawns were insufficient to win. The next day Kasparov faced another crucial game, against Ivanchuk, but this time he forcefully hit home and drew level with Anand, who experienced his darkest hour when he blundered in a slightly inferior position against his former second Gurevich. Half a point ahead of Kasparov, Anand and Khalifman, Boris Gelfand topped the table after two outstanding wins against Polugaevsky and Beliavsky.



The first photo of Anand to appear in New In Chess (1987/7) after he won the Junior World Championship in Baguio City, the Philippines.

In the next two rounds Anand and Kasparov joined Gelfand by both scoring one and a half points. Anand compensated for his unnecessary loss against Gurevich with a win from a highly dubious position against Polugaevsky, while Beliavsky failed to put up prolonged resistance against Kasparov's aggressive intentions. In Rounds 7 and 8 Anand, Gelfand and Kasparov all drew their games, but only one of these draws (Polugaevsky-Kasparov) came about without any real fighting.

Amazing Anand

The pairings for the decisive last round seemed to favour Kasparov, although there were some 'buts'. Kasparov was White against Khalifman, but the latter had made a very good impression throughout the tournament, even though he suffered two unfortunate losses. Anand had the black pieces against Beliavsky. Just like two years ago Beliavsky played way below his level in Reggio, but with a fighter of his calibre you could never be sure. Finally, Gelfand played Black against Karpov, who trailed half a point behind the leaders. Karpov played a strong tournament and might have been a clear contender for first place if he had not gone under in the incredible complications of his fourth round game against Khalifman, when instead of finding a win in one he flashed out a loss in one.

The first player to finish his game was the amazing Viswanathan Anand. After he had quite effortlessly equalized, Anand could be happy that despite his poor form Beliavsky also wanted to fight in this final game. (After the round Smyslov asked Kasparov, 'Why didn't you order Beliavsky to play for a draw?' Answer: 'I don't have such relations as Karpov used to have with his seconds.') Instead of going for a drawish liquidation Beliavsky tried to prove an advantage. As it looked as if he could always bail out with a draw there seemed to be nothing wrong with this decision. While Anand was looking for a way to avoid the draw he suddenly found a remarkable resource which Beliavsky had missed. Soon the black initiative turned into a winning attack and after forty moves a broken Beliavsky had to resign.

By then it was clear that Kasparov would in all probability have to resign himself to a draw. Khalifman had deftly defended and seemed to have no reason to worry. After the game had been drawn Kasparov was amazed to realize that during the game he had forgotten some of his recent analytical work. According to his own analysis Black would face a tough task after 24.♗d5 instead of the 24.♖f1 Kasparov played. 'I spent one hour and twenty minutes to get to a position that I had already analysed and then forgot the right move.' In Kasparov's view this omission was symptomatic of the problems he currently faces in chess. 'I have to feel that I know everything very well. I'm no longer ahead of these players, ahead of chess theory. I don't spend enough time on it and that's very painful to me. Anand may lose a game and he's upset, but for me it's the end of the world. I need a couple of months of serious preparation. In any case I will have more time before Linares. I certainly will be better prepared in Linares.'

By far the longest game of the round was that between Karpov and Gelfand, in which Karpov tried till move 90 to win a rook endgame with an extra pawn. By saving the draw Boris Gelfand secured shared second place with Kasparov. In a gratifyingly sporting manner Gelfand commented on his result. 'Second place is also a good achievement for me. Vishy played better. He played a very strong tournament, probably the best in his life, with many high-quality games. I'm very satisfied with my first seven rounds. In both my last two games I was much worse.'

Another last round game worthy of attention was Ivanchuk-Polugaevsky, in which the latter came close to a win. Polugaevsky finished at fifty per cent and could look back on a number of creative games. Ivanchuk's fifty per cent score was a bit disappointing, but this view was not shared by himself. As so often before he surprised us with his own evaluation of the tournament. 'I played well in this tournament. Many interesting ideas, although they were often badly realized. I didn't specifically prepare for this tournament. I worked hard for my match against Timman. That was more important to me. After I lost to Yusupov in the Candidates' matches, I realized that I had to learn how to play matches.'

No false modesty

Shortly after his historic victory I managed to extricate Anand from the hordes of signature-hunters and an army of Italian journalists who all wanted to know at what age he had learned to play chess, and asked him a few questions.

– *Was this the strongest tournament in history?*

'It's clearly one of the strongest events in history. Linares was the strongest tournament in history, then Tilburg became the strongest tournament in history. This one is now the strongest in history. I don't want to make too much out of it, but I don't want to have any false modesty either. I won one of the strongest tournaments in history, so I'm quite delighted with myself.'

– Nine former Soviets and you yourself. Did that sound appealing to you?

'Initially I wasn't quite sure, but then I was quite enthusiastic. Most of the Soviets here speak English and I get along with most of them. This is not like playing a tournament in the Soviet Union. I can understand that sort of complaint, because you get bored to death. Well, this was in 1987 for example when I went there. Most of the Russian players were staying in a different hotel, so you couldn't talk to them. They would come to the board, beat you and go back.'

– After your match against Dreev you showed me some clippings from Indian magazines. One sentence I was delighted to quote was, 'So watch out all you Grandmasters out there. And you too, World Champion Garry Kasparov. The Indian tiger is on the prowl. And he is hungry.' At that time we more or less had a laugh about this. Now it really seems like the Indian tiger is on the prowl.

'I like this. It's nice when the people back home appreciate what you're doing. Definitely this marks a very important step. It's the first time I haven't messed up at the end of a tournament. I lost a game against Gurevich, but I stabilized. If you see how erratic I've been earlier you can understand that this is something special. But I don't want to get carried away too much.'

– Does the thought that you won't be able to play for the world title before 1996 depress you?

'Not in that sense. You might have noticed that in Brussels I wasn't so upset yet. I remained fairly cheerful. But after a while it started to sink in what I had done. Especially because I like to play these matches. They are fun. But I didn't realize this then, because during a match you envy everyone. I realize that the reason I am supposed to be playing in 1996 is that I didn't play well enough in 1991. I have no complaints. I hope I will improve enough to be a serious candidate for the title in the next cycle.'

– You said that you didn't specifically prepare for this tournament and were still reaping the fruits of your preparation for Karpov. Are we witnessing the beginning of a new era? A new type of chess?

'When Kasparov won the title people thought that this was going to be the era of hard workers. And probably it was, because a lot of people improved their preparation. But not everyone can be alike. Kasparov has simply strained himself all his life and that's the way he looks at chess. In a scientific way. I speak for myself, but I imagine some players like Nigel (Short) have a similar attitude. That hard work is one part. You can emphasize other parts as well. Mental toughness during a game, or just hanging in there and fighting. Or staying alert. Or having an appetite for chess. But in one way Kasparov has changed chess, in that it is no longer possible for players to be lazy anymore. But I don't believe in these eras too much. There have always been a lot of individual players who didn't work. For instance like Ljubo. Whether it's Karpov's era or Kasparov's era, he's still doing the same thing.'

– Spassky expressed his amazement this afternoon that in this tournament Kasparov was no longer the monarch that he used to be, but at best first among equals.

'Well, 1990 and 1991 have not been as smooth for him as 1988 or 1989, when he was just killing everyone. But this had to stop sooner or later. I don't want to run down Kasparov's chess at all. He is simply one of the greatest players in the world, maybe ever. But the fact remains that his successes were partly due to the fact that his opponents were just chickening out or they were scared of him. If you still lose to the guy, even if you're scared and cautious, then you figure out, 'Why the hell should I be scared?' And I think that's what's happening now. People are less scared of him. Not because he's been playing badly, but simply because they're fed up with losing anyway. If I'm going to lose to him I lose in a battle. Like a man. Well, this is my attitude. I don't want to run him down, but I do think that the fact that people were scared of him had some part to play.'

– Do you think that one of the reasons why Kasparov finds it hard to play against you is that he has trouble pinpointing your style?

'Maybe this is true. A lot of Soviets you can pinpoint, because they worked on chess in a very proper environment. And of course I'm sort of random. In India I just played chess and I'm doing well. I don't even know how people say I play. I just have a good time and play. I try to keep a good mix and that's about it.'

NOTES BY

Vishy Anand

FR 19.1
Garry Kasparov
Vishy Anand
Reggio Emilia 1991/92 (2)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 These days Garry prefers the hyperaggressive 3.exd5, of course.

3...c5 4.exd5 ♕xd5 5.dxc5

Not something my opponent is known for – avoiding theory. This pleased me very much.

5...♗xc5 6.♘gf3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♕e2

The white set-up is not completely without venom. My queen can be a bit awkwardly placed and White has not yet decided where to put his king. Sometimes White has plans to play ♘b3 and ♗g5. So I had to keep my pieces a bit flexible.

8...♘bd7!

8...♘c6 was premature, as after 9.♘e4 White has a good position. The text covers the knight and the bishop.

9.♘e4 b6 I did not see any other way to get the queen's bishop out.

10.♘xc5 ♕xc5

If 10...♘xc5, then 11.♗c4 and my queen has difficulty finding a good spot. Exchanging queens leads to a slightly worse ending.

11.♗e3 ♕c7 12.♗d4 ♗b7 13.0-0-0

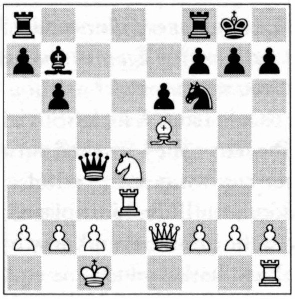
Now, if I give him one move, ♔b1 or ♘e5, I will be worse. So I had to act quickly, which is essential to get rid of the bishop.

13...♘c5! As the king is on c1, 14.♗xf6 is answered by 14...♕f4+ and 15...♕xf6.

14.♗e5 This leaves me no choice. 14...♕e7 loses to 15.♗d6, so:

14...♘xd3+ 15.♖xd3 ♕c4 16.♘d4

On 16.♘d2 I play 16...♕g4 with approximately equality.



16...♗e4

At this point I still had not made up my mind whether to bite the bullet. Instead of 16...♗e4 I could also have played 16...♕xa2. Now after 17.♗xf6 ♕a1+ 18.♔d2 ♕a5+ I do not see a win for White. For instance: 19.b4 ♕xb4+ 20.♔c1 gxf6 21.♕g4+ ♔h8 22.♖h3 ♖g8 23.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 24.♕h4+ ♔g6! (not 24...♔g7? 25.♘xe6+) 25.♕g4+ ♔h7. Nevertheless I decided to stick to the safe 16...♗e4 since it gave me the opportunity to do this maniacal thing on the next move.

17.♖e3 ♕xa2

I thought for a long time and the general tendency was to play something safe like 17...♕xe2, but I felt that I might be slightly worse. I decided to make it more complicated and I saw, of course, that I would recapture my piece by force.

18.♗xf6 If instead 18.♖xe4, ♕a1+ 19.♔d2 ♘xe4+ wins for Black.

18...♗g6 19.♖a3

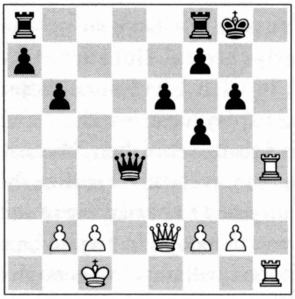
White has an extra piece, but there is no way to keep it. In fact, he returned it in a way I had not seen.

19...♕d5 20.h4 I had not considered this idea.

20...gxf6 21.h5 ♕xd4

On 21...♗e4 I have not found anything forced for White (22.f3 ♕g5+ and 23...♗b7), but I suspect it is not very good for Black.

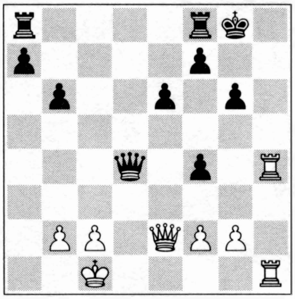
22.hxg6 hxg6 23.♖ah3 f5 The only move to fianchetto my king. **24.♖h4!**



A nice move that tickles my queen from its ideal position.

24...f4

I simply played this instantly. I did calculate anything, but felt that 24...♕f6 should be losing. In fact, it is very close to it. After 25.♕e3 White has an incredible attack. The point is that without my queen hanging around in the centre I get no chances to counterattack his king. For example with ♖ad8, ♖xc2 followed by ♖c8 and perpetual. All these lines I miss if I withdraw my queen. 24...f4 is simple and natural.



25.♕f3?

A mistake. He should have played 25.g3 when 25...e5 is possible but extremely risky. But there were other ways to make this work: 25...♖ac8; now if 26.♖xf4 ♕g7 and I have adequate time for ♖c5 followed by ♖h5. And if (on 25...♖ac8) 26.gxf4 I again have a choice:

A) 26...♖c5 27.f5 ♕f6 28.fxe6 fxe6 29.♖h8+ ♕xh8 30.♕xe6+ ♔g7 and it is probably a draw, e.g. 31.♕d7+ ♔g8 (31...♖f7? 32.♕d4+) or 31.♕e7+ ♖f7, again with a draw.

B) 26...♕f6 27.♕e5 ♕xe5 28.fxe5 g5 (only move) and now it just about works, because after 29.♖h8+ I have my exit by f5, and in case of 29.♖h5 I play 29...♖fd8 and my king is threatening to go to e7, making it a draw.

25...♖ac8 26.♖xf4 ♕c5

This gives me the vital tempo I need.

27.c3 ♔g7

Now any threat on the h-file is simply met by ♖h8.

28.♖hh4?

His last mistake. 28.♖fh4 was still his best chance. E.g.: 28...♕g5+ 29.♔c2 ♕f5+ 30.♕xf5, and I have two ways of recapturing: 30...gxf5 31.♖a4 ♖c7 (31...a5 32.b4 dissolves all the queenside pawns and leaves White with very good chances to draw) 32.♖ha1, with drawing chances. 30...exf5 31.♖a4 ♖fe8 32.♖d1, and I suspect the position is a draw.

28...♕e5 29.g3 ♕e1+ 30.♔c2 ♖cd8 31.♖d4 ♕e5

As it served no further purpose on e1 the queen returns.

32.♖hf4 ♕c7 33.♕e3 e5 34.♖xd8 ♖xd8 35.♖e4 ♖d5 36.g4

Trying to create some chances with g5 and ♕h3, but since this does not work out he should have settled for 36.f4.

36...b5

Quite a nice move. I have to make progress on the queenside and expose his king.

37.g5 ♕d6 38.f3 a5 39.♕e2 ♕e6 40.♕h2 ♕f5 41.♕g3

Played after a long think. His plan with 41.♕h6+ does not work: 41...♔g8 42.♔b3 and Black has two ways of forcing matters:

A) 42...♖d2 43.♖h4 ♕c2+.

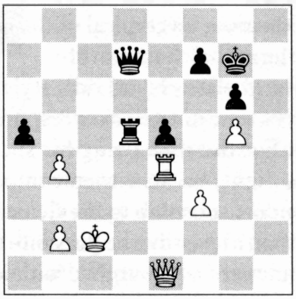
B) 42...♖d4 is more amusing; 43.cxd4 ♕xf3+ wins the rook.

41...♕d7

Gaining a useful tempo.

42.♕e1 b4 43.cxb4

The best chance was 43.b3 and I do not see a clear win for Black. But White's king is getting progressively weaker, so it should be lost.



43...♕a4+

Now it is a forced win in all lines. White has about four moves he can consider.

A) 44.♔b1 ♖d1+;

B) 44.♔c1 axb4 45.♖xe5 ♖d8 and White has no way to meet all the threats;

C) 44.♔c3 loses by force to 44...♕c6+:

C1) 45.♔b3 ♖d3+ 46.♔a2 ♕a4+ and ♖d1;

C2) 45.♖c4 allows 45...axb4+ 46.♔xb4 ♖b5+ 47.♔c3 ♕xf3+;

D) And finally what he played:

44.b3 ♕a2+ 45.♔c3 a4 46.bxa4 ♕a3+ 47.♔c2 ♕xa4+

It was already possible to win with 47...♖d3, but I decided to collect the pawn first.

48.♔c3 ♕a3+ 49.♔c2 ♖d3

White resigned. It is mate by force.

The year 1992 saw the death of probably the most widely-loved world champion ever, Mikhail Tal. He had been ravaged by ill-health for years, but his unquenchable love for chess had remained to the very end. In New In Chess 1992/5, Genna Sosonko paid a warm personal tribute, and Jan Timman annotated a characteristically brilliant Tal win.

My Misha

Genna Sosonko

Halfway through the 1950's a young man, practically a boy still, with fiery black eyes and a way of playing which amazed everyone, battled his way into the strictly hierarchical world of chess. Some people were bewildered, others shocked. A comment in one of the Dutch papers of the time was typical of the general reaction of the entire chess world.

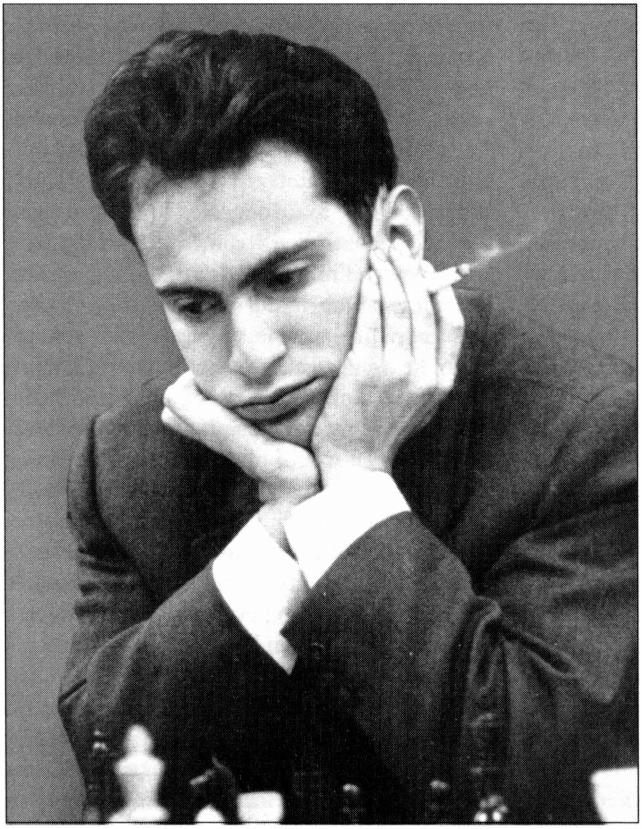
’For a world class player Tal's style is exceptionally reckless, not to say irresponsible and daredevil. For the time being his success puts him in the right, because even competent and solid defenders succumb to his elementary violence. As soon as possible he goes into the attack and his games are not complete without a spectacular sacrifice of one or more pieces. There is great controversy about this drastic way of playing. Some consider him a mere adventurer with luck on his side. Others make him a genius who opens up new areas in the game of chess.'

'My head is filled with sunshine' – the first words of the 23-year-old Misha Tal in an overcrowded hall in Moscow, right after his splendid victory in the Candidates' tournament in Yugoslavia in 1959. At the same place he replied to a question on his forthcoming match against Botvinnik: 'I will play 1.e2-e4 and beat him!' Do you remember this game? Amongst the 32 moves there were the following manoeuvres: ♔e1-d1-e1, h4-♖h1-♖h3-♖e3, ♖a1-b1-b4-f4-d4 and, finally, ♕d1-g4-g7-h7-h5-d1.

Though he was already a Candidate, Tal had met the World Champion only once, during the Olympiad in Munich in 1958 (the story goes that one time little Misha, with a chess board under his arm, was not received by Botvinnik, who was taking a rest in the coastal areas of Riga – a journalistic fabrication, needless to say). Walking along the tables, while his opponent was thinking about a move, the World Champion asked the young Candidate: 'What did you sacrifice that pawn for?', receiving the – as Misha would put it 'hooliganish' answer: 'Because it disturbed me.' He loved the word 'hooligan', and often during an analysis, when he had suggested some unclear sacrifice, he added: 'Let's be hooligans for a bit...'

I got to know Misha in the autumn of 1966. He had come to Leningrad for some days and in a small room of a mutual friend we played a great many blitz games (of which I managed to win one and to make a few draws). He came back a few times, we became friends and it was not really a surprise when he asked me to come to his town, to Riga, to work together. This was some time before his match against Gligoric and I was greatly flattered, of course. Between travelling to Riga several times and attending matches and tournaments as a second I think I spent something like six months with him on that occasion.

At eleven o'clock I arrived at a big apartment in the centre of Riga, and about half an hour later we were sitting at the chess board. Now, after a quarter of a century, I understand that the variations (and we only studied openings, of course) were not really necessary for him. For him (and



Probably no other world champion has loved chess so fanatically as Mikhail Tal.

in this I fully agree with Spassky) the most important thing was to create a situation in which his pieces came alive; and they *did* live for him, like they did for no one else. It was essential for him to create pressure and to seize the initiative, to create a position in which the sacred moment – that of giving mate – would prevail despite and even in the face of material considerations.

I remember spending a lot of time on variations like 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 c5 5.cxd5 cxd4, or the pawn sacrifice in the Queen's Indian Defence, d4-d5, which he used in a little known training game against Kholmov. But we also looked at the Nimzo-Indian and the Ruy Lopez, which were the most frequently used openings in his match against Gligoric. Quite often his permanent trainer, Alexander Koblenz – 'maestro' to his friends, usually also for Misha, came in. Their original, witty and ironical way of talking to each other betrayed a deep and longstanding affection. 'Enough for today', Misha would say, 'blitz, blitz'. Having sacrificed his pieces against both of us in turn (mostly incorrectly) he kept on saying: 'No matter, now I will make his flag fall.' Or in very sharp situations, when he himself had only a few seconds left, his favourite words were: 'Calmness is my girlfriend.' I cannot remember a time when he did not visibly enjoy playing blitz chess. It really didn't matter if it was played in the Moscow or Leningrad championships – which he usually won – or the World Blitz Championship – that he won in 1988 – or just in the lobby of the hotel after an amateur had trapped him into playing a five-minute game.

With the computer era still far away, 'Gligi's' games were spread over several bulletins and when searching for them, Misha often stumbled on some magazines – he received magazines from all over the world – and, with a lingering look at a diagram he would say: 'Can't we look at the games of the Columbian championship?' 'Perhaps you had better take a rest now,' the voice of Misha's mother Ida Grigorjevna, a tall, stately woman, would boom. She was the eldest daughter of a Jewish middle-class family from Riga. In August of this year her sister Riva will be ninety years of age; she has lived in The Hague since the late twenties, and on his frequent trips to the Netherlands Misha visited her nearly every time. Her other sister, Ganja, is only two years younger and lives in Brooklyn, New York now. I remember her quite well from her time in Riga. Misha's mother, who died in 1979, had the same surname as her husband: Tal, having married a cousin. In the large (at least in my eyes in those days) apartment there lived, besides her, the following people: Misha with his girlfriend – who emigrated in 1972, and as far as I know now lives in Germany - Misha's first wife Sally – who left the country in 1980 and now lives in Antwerp, and their son Gera – a delightful boy with curly hair, now a father of two children and a dentist in Beer-Sheva in Israel. I remember twelve years ago, when Misha met his son, who had come over from Germany especially for the occasion, a few times in my apartment in Amsterdam. In those pre-'vegetarian' days an open meeting between a father and a son – even with just a few fellow-grandmasters present – might have had unpleasant consequences, for example a ban on leaving the country for a year, if not more (as Misha was to find out later). Misha's eldest brother, Yasya, lived there too. He survived his mother by just a few years. And then there were the visits – almost daily – of uncle Robert, as everybody called him, a friend of Misha's father who had been a doctor and an outstanding man, praised by all who had known him before he died in 1957. Uncle Robert had had a tough life – he had been a taxi-driver in Paris in the 1920's and had lost his entire family during the war. A weak player himself, he could watch us at our analyses and blitz games for hours, casting looks of tender love at Misha. Sometimes uncle Robert reprimanded Misha for something, and when Misha defended himself, Ida Grigorjevna would take uncle Robert's side and say: 'Misha, answer civilly; don't forget that he is after all your father...' (Now, a quarter of a century later, with nearly all the people at her place dead or gone, I can still see uncle Robert, with his perennial cigarette in his nicotine-stained fingers and often with a glass of cognac as well. And Misha really looked like him, especially in his later years, not only in his way of talking and behaving but also in his character). During these tiffs I usually averted my eyes in embarrassment, but they paid no attention to me anyway, for to them I was part of the family.

Then the evening came and we had to go somewhere for dinner. We called a taxi and went to one of the restaurants in Riga, where everyone knew Misha, of course. When Tal became World Champion they gave him a Volga, actually the best Soviet car at the time. But he gave the car to his brother. He was completely indifferent to every form of technology and never even considered learning to drive a car. It was only towards the end of his life that electric shavers started to play a role. Occasionally you could see the marks they left on his face. In my time he relied on his brother's skill with a razor, but more often he went to the hairdresser, just like when he was travelling. He did not like ties and only wore them under duress. Needless to say, he never learned how to tie one. Nor did he ever wear a watch. 'What's that – something ticking away on my arm!' The conventional meaning of time did not exist for him: I remember him missing many a train. One time, way back in his younger years, he tried to catch a plane by taxi (gambling on a three-hour stop-over), a gamble which, according to some eye-witnesses, actually paid off.

In taxis we would often play a game which I had never heard about before, and which involved taking the four figures of the registration number of the car in front you and turning them into twenty-one by different means of calculation, but using every figure only once. I could never figure out how he triumphantly extracted roots, differentiated and integrated.

During supper and often for a long time afterwards we drank. Misha did not like wine, preferring stronger stuff - vodka, cognac or strong cocktails, rum-cola for example. And just to avoid any misunderstanding: this was none of your sipping through a straw business. I will never forget the face of the bartender in Wijk aan Zee – where we met for the first time outside the Soviet Union in January 1973 – when he had to top up the brandy five times. Some years ago Misha, who became less and less able to stay the pace, just fell asleep at the end of the tournament banquet in Reykjavik – towards the end of his life this happened more and more often. Kortchnoi and Spassky, who had played there as well, were not on the best of terms, but some action was called for, so they looked at one another. 'What about it, shall we carry him?', one of them asked. 'Yes, let's carry him', the other replied. The road was not near, but the two rivals from his youth performed their task excellently and explained to the startled hotel porter that this was a chess player's life: such heavy thinking really tires you out...

I remember very well his sparkling but always mild humor, his infectious laughter, which got him going until the tears streamed down his face, his quick-wittedness, his invariable remark (usually around midnight): 'Waiter! please change my interlocutor!' I believe it was Sheridan who said that 'true wit is much nearer to good nature than we suppose'. Misha's wit was always true.

Despite his physical handicap – he had only three fingers on his right hand – he played the piano, and not badly either. His first wife Sally remembers that on the night they met Misha played an etude of Chopin. Some months before his first match against Botvinnik he asked the well-known pianist Bella Davidovich, with whom Tal had a close friendship, whether she had the *Elegy* by Rachmaninov in her repertoire. Hearing that she did not, he said: 'Will you promise me to play it after my victory over Botvinnik?' It was the custom at that time in the Soviet Union to organize big concerts after the official opening or closing ceremonies of chess tournaments and matches. On the evening of the 17th game, when the score had become 10-7 in favour of Tal, the phone in the Davidovich apartment rang: 'You can start practising the Elegy'. And now, 32 years later, whenever she plays Rachmaninov's 'Elegy', Bella Davidovich, who has been living in the U.S. for a long time now, thinks of Misha Tal on that night in the Pushkin Theatre, when it was played for the first time. Misha's favourite composers were Tchaikovsky, Chopin and Rachmaninov.

I will never forget the bartender's face, when he had to top up the brandy five times.

In the summer we often went to the coastal area near Riga, where Tal had been given three rooms in a *dacha* near the beach. Now it is hard to believe, but I can still see Misha, standing between two improvised goal posts (t-shirt and swimming bag) on the sunny beach and passionately (he did everything passionately) trying to prevent me from scoring a goal. He used to be a goalkeeper in his university team and he always kept his passion for soccer.

He was never blessed with good health. Both in Riga and on the coast he was troubled by his kidneys, and more than once he had to be taken away by ambulance. He was in hospital many times and had about twenty operations. There were scars on his forehead: the consequence of a terrible blow on the head with a bottle in a nightbar in Havana during the 1966 Olympiad in Cuba (a well-known joke of Petrosian in those years was that only someone with the sturdy health of Tal could survive such a blow...)

Those days, the end of the 1960's, marked the beginning of a period in Misha's life, when he got hooked on morphine. I can still see how he seemed to be covered all over with ant bites, I can see the veins on his arms, the nurses trying hard to find a spot yet untouched. I also know that later, in Moscow, ambulance drivers were instructed not to heed calls from Tal. Rumours about this went around Moscow. I remember a question during a lecture: 'Is it true that you are a morphinist, comrade Tal?'. And his instant reaction: 'What do you think? I'm a Chigorinist!' I believe this period lasted for a couple of years. How he got out of it, I don't know.

Why did he play the way he did, and why did he win? It is always easy to hide behind words like 'talent' or 'genius'. Tolush, having lost the crucial game in the last round of his best tournament in 1957, said to Spassky: 'You know Boris, today I lost against a player of genius'. During the Interzonal tournament in Taxco, another respectable grandmaster said to me, quite sincerely: 'None of us can hold a candle to Misha.' And even Petrosian, usually rather stingy with compliments, said that he knew only one living chess genius.

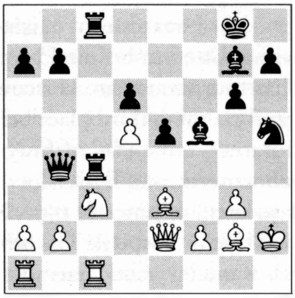
This brings us to a possible clue to the phenomenon of Mikhail Tal – at least, as I see it, since I am not inclined to explain things the way Kortchnoi does, who remembered: 'One day in a restaurant Tal said to me: "Well, if you want -I will gaze at that waiter and he will come up to us." Also, contrary to Kortchnoi, I cannot accept Benko's insufficient defence in the Candidates' tournament of 1959, when he wore sunglasses to protect himself against his opponents 'influence'. But it is certainly true that Tal's whole appearance, especially in his younger years, radiated a certain aura. His head bent over the board, his fiery eyes piercing the board and his opponent, those moving lips, the smile which appeared on his inspired face when he had found a combination, the enormous concentration of his thoughts – or maybe rather the force of his thoughts – created something which weaker minds could not overcome. This spirit, combined with his youthful energy at the end of the 1950's and in the early 1960's, made him invincible.

'You, Mishik,' the late Stein said to him in Riga in 1969, 'You have the strongest spirit of us all.' And indeed, his spirit was stronger than anyone else's. Even when his organs had started to deteriorate, his spirit kept shining till the very end, till the very last days. In 1979, after he had won the very big Montreal tournament (together with Karpov) the 43-year-old Tal, now a much more balanced player with a much deeper understanding of chess than when he reigned as Champion, said: 'Now I would smash that Tal to the ground.' I had my doubts about that. And not because his favourite squares d5, f5 and e6 (by his own admission) were protected so much more strictly. The fact was that Tal, academic knowledge and understanding and all, would have had to withstand the concentration of thought and force of youth which ground down even the very best players at the time.

I remember the summer in Moscow in 1968. I was helping Misha with his match against Kortchnoi, a very difficult opponent for him; Tal lost the match 4½-5½. I remember the last game, in which Misha (as Black) launched a strong attack in the Dutch Defence; he could win, but the adjourned position did not promise much more than a draw. A sleepless night of analysis, the resumption, the closing ceremony, long strolls afterwards through Moscow, where he had so many friends. I remember a wooden house right in the centre of Moscow, where the artist Igin lived – he passed away long ago – a friend of many chess players, who often dropped by at his place, day or night, just like the artists, young actresses and other bohemians of the Moscow of the sixties and seventies. Igin himself was a picturesque host, who succinctly described himself as: 'An old cognac drinker'. That night it turned out there were no tickets left for the Moscow-Riga flight, but Misha was well-known, so we got seats in the pilots' cabin. Later that same night I fell asleep in Misha's apartment. When I woke up the following morning, the room was thick with smoke and Misha looked down at me from the divan, with a voluminous book in his hands which he had almost finished. He read extremely quickly, and when I started living in the West I always had to take heaps of forbidden books along for Misha. I remember that one evening at the Olympiad in Nice I gave him Solzhenitsyn's recently published *The Gulag Archipelago*, and a copy of an emigrant newspaper. In the morning he returned everything he had read and said: 'I can't find a single word in the crossword puzzle in the paper!' I was stunned. 'And what about the book?' I asked. 'He writes very maliciously,' he replied. A startling answer for me then. But slowly an explanation dawned on me and yet another clue to reveal Mikhail Tal's personality. The fact is that in some higher sense he could not be moved by these worldly things.

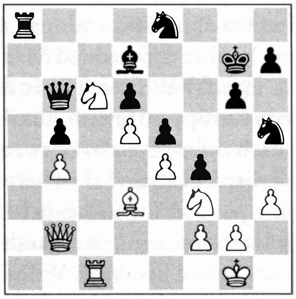
He was also totally uninterested in material values. I remember that after one of the tournaments in Tilburg I went shopping with him, not one of his favourite activities. He had five guilder notes in his pocket (needless to say that he had no such thing as a purse or wallet), mixed up with thousand guilder notes, and I remember his sincere astonishment when he discovered yet another one in one of his side pockets. How many times did he lose his prizes, how many times did he leave his passport in hotels or just forget everything somewhere? I remember his astonishment when I scolded him in the hotel in Taxco for paying seventy dollars for a three-minute conversation to New York City and told him that in some countries, and above all in hotels there, you should avoid using the telephone. Beliavsky told me that when he blamed Misha for giving almost his entire prize of several thousand dollars for winning the World Championship blitz in Saint John to the Sport Grange, he just replied: 'Well, they asked me and I gave it to them.'

He, of course, did not care for titles and prizes. I think that even the title of World Champion did not interest him much. He did not care at all for power, money, perks, like his successors of the last several years. All this did not interest him. He recently stayed in Israel sometimes, but I don't think he had that much interest in Jewishness either. I remember *Pravda* once writing about one of the Olympiads: 'In the USSR team representatives of different nationalities play: Petrosian, the Armenian; Smyslov, the Russian; Keres, the Estonian; and Tal from Riga (!)'. He did not even take much interest in himself. His health, his outward appearance, or what other people thought of him. He was someone from another planet and in fact there was only one thing which troubled him and for which he cared. And this was:



1...♘f4

Or, let's say, this:



1.♖c5

He belonged to that small category of people who matter-of-factly rejected the things the majority of people strive for, who traveled through life lightly, a special person, a decoration of the earth. Burning out himself, he knew that life was no dress-rehearsal, that there would be no second chance. But he could not live any other way, nor did he want to.

Twenty years ago I played my first tournament after leaving the Soviet Union: the reserve master group in Wijk aan Zee. Misha, who played in the main event, visited the general hall every day (in those days the grandmaster group played separately) and after studying my position went on to the other games and quite often also to the games of other groups. We talked a lot in those days (we had a lot of catching up to do), sometimes so late that I had to walk from Wijk aan Zee to Beverwijk (experienced participants of the Hoogovens tournament will know what I'm talking about), because there were no more buses, or rather, there were none *yet*. I remember a big blitz tournament on the free day for all who wanted to play; it went on for the entire day and was won by Misha (for the information of the modern professional: the first prize was one hundred guilders).

One of his favourite expressions was: 'He plays tasteful chess.' And so he did himself. He did not like to write down his comments on a game, he preferred to record them on tape. In the old days he just dictated. This is how he met his wife Gelya in the autumn of 1970, when some 'formality' created by the Sports Committee kept him out of the USSR Championship, held that year in his own Riga. He always wrote down his moves in the short notation, and always before he made them. On rare occasions, when his opponent was extremely curious and caught glancing at the notation form, he would cover the move with his pen. If he did not like the move he crossed it out and wrote down another one. As he grew older, he unfortunately had to say more and more often: 'I even wrote down the winning move, but crossed it out at the last moment...'

An hour and a half or two hours before the game he used to eat something, did not talk much and disappeared into his own private world. This occurred, for instance, during his match against Kortchnoi, and I understood that it was better not to disturb him during these moments. We lunched at various places – the matches for which everything is regulated, from the minutes to the calories, were still far away. And he loved everything he should not have, of course: pungent, salty and seasoned. As far as I can remember Misha always smoked a lot, usually two or three packets a day, but when playing he smoked at least two more; he kept smoking until his very last days.

The last time I saw Misha was in Tilburg, in the autumn of last year. He arrived from Germany, where he had recently moved with his wife and daughter Jeanna, a conservatory student whom he loved very much. He looked terrible, many years older than he was, but he remained the old Misha. When an acquaintance greeted him he replied: 'Thank you,' and after the other's puzzled look: 'Thank you for recognizing me...'

He mostly sat in the press centre of the tournament with his perpetual cigarette, saying little, but every remark regarding chess always absolutely to the point. He became a bit more animated when he showed one of his latest games – against Panno, from a tournament in Buenos Aires – to students of the Max Euwe academy, in his usual way. The young people from the early nineties looked at him as if he was Staunton or Zukertort. It was not a miracle that he lived, but that he did not die before.

He still played in the last USSR Championship and afterwards wrote (together with Vaganian, with whom he became close during the last few years) a long article for our magazine.

In February, when I was in Cannes, I was asked to phone him. 'Listen', Misha said, 'I'm now reading about World Championship matches at which I myself was present. It did not happen that way, it happened differently. Come and we will write something together.' I promised to come, but somehow everything was postponed again and again.

Misha played his last tournament in Barcelona. There were young and talented players. He joked about these promising people: 'At that age I was already ex-World Champion...' Half the tournament he was ill and ran a temperature. In the last game, which he assumed would be a quick draw, with him as White, he played 3.♗b5 in the Sicilian defence and a few moves later offered a draw, which his young opponent declined. A few hours later, in a lost position and with his king under attack, his opponent himself offered a draw. This was the last tournament game Misha played, and won.

We phoned each other quite often and a few days before I was to leave for the Olympiad in Manila, I received a letter from Misha. It went as follows:

Dear Genna,

I am sorry to say that, for the moment, I cannot do the story on the tournament which I promised you – I have been feeling very poorly. Monday I will be treated in Moscow in another of my perennial appointments with the doctors. Probably there will be an operation soon, but I will have plenty of time and facilities for writing.

I wish you and your entire, least russified (let's put it this way) team every possible success.

Warm regards, Misha

This was the last I heard from Misha. But before he was admitted to hospital he played yet another blitz tournament in Moscow, beating Kasparov and claiming third place behind Kasparov and Bareev, but ahead of Smyslov, Dolmatov, Vyzhmanavin, and Beliavsky.

Some days later, on June 28, 1992, Misha Tal died in that Moscow hospital. The official cause of his death was a laryngeal haemorrhage, but actually all his organs had stopped functioning. He was buried in Riga, in the town where he was born, in a Jewish cemetery, near the graves of his relatives. He was 55 years of age.

The last few years he seemed older than his age, but I never thought of him as an elderly man – to me he always remained Misha. Sometimes I ask myself: Why is it that these boys from decent European Jewish families are so similar to each other, even in outward appearance: Modigliani, Kafka, Tal -where does this all-absorbing passion for self-expression come from? What is the secret? I don't know.

Some years before his death Wilhelm Steinitz said: 'I am not a chess historian, I am myself a piece of history which nobody can pass by.' Whoever was, is or will be concerned with the amazing world of chess will not pass by this bright name: Misha Tal.

I know that there is a big difference between 'the artist as a genius' and 'the artist as a human being'. I, who have had the privilege of getting to know Misha Tal from nearby, in everyday life, have tried to tell you something about this. For Mikhail Tal, as a genius of chess, for the unforgettable Misha, let the games speak...

NOTES BY
Jan Timman

NI 25.6
Boris Spassky
Mikhail Tal
Tallinn 1973 (13)

When was Tal at his zenith? In 1960, 1973 or 1979? The only sensible answer is that in 1973 and 1979 he ran out of breath in the race for the world championship. But the way he played in Tallinn and Sochi 1973 on the one hand, and in Montreal and Riga 1979 on the other, was so impressive that it would have been a credit to any World Champion, especially in 1973. This was the first tournament I played together with him. Spassky was making his first outing into the tournament ring since his match against Fischer. And old-timers Keres, Bronstein and Polugaevsky were there too. Tal had effortlessly taken a big lead. After that tournament he should by rights have played Fischer. That was what I felt then, and it still bugs me how disillusioning reality can be: Tal went on to be sidelined through sickness in the Interzonal and Fischer stopped playing altogether.

The game against Spassky gives a good picture of Tal's strength: clear and razor-sharp. I have very little to add to his own annotation in *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*. The hammer-blows speak for themselves.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♗g5

Spassky's old love, the Leningrad variation. Tal took this as a sign that Spassky was looking for a sharp battle; he was only too happy to oblige.

4...h6 5.♗h4 c5 6.d5 b5

A sharp advance, reminiscent of the Benkö and Blumenfeld Gambits.

7.dxe6

Maybe White should not accept the gambit straightaway; 7.e3 is at the very least a useful move. Only after Black has gone for 7...♗b7 should White capture on e6 and b5. 7...0-0 is strongly met by 8.♕f3! as I played against Yusupov in Hilversum in 1986.

7...fxe6 8.cxb5 d5 9.e3 0-0 10.♘f3

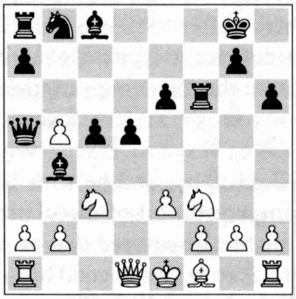
After this game this knight move dropped out of use. Stronger is 10.♗d3, in order to develop the knight to e2. The push 10...d4 is refuted by 11.exd4 cxd4 12.a3 ♗a5 13.b4.

Riga 1958. Young Tal and Petrosian watching Spassky at the Soviet championship.

10...♕a5

Of course. Black is going to put pressure on c3.

11.♗xf6 ♖xf6



12.♕d2

Tal indicates 12.♕c1 as safer. A very interesting position can then arise after 12...d4 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♖xf3 15.gxf3 ♘d7. Black's prospects seem to be OK.

12...a6 The thematic break move.

13.bxa6 Risky. After 13.b6 White could still have stopped Black's combinatory action.

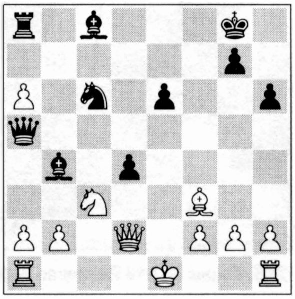
13...♘c6! Tal leaves the a6 pawn for later and prepares a combination.

14.♗e2 This was White's last chance to stop Black's combination, viz. with 14.♕c1, in order to meet 14...d4 with 15.a3. According to Tal this would have averted the immediate danger for White. But it seems to me that Black has a very promising action in 15...♗xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♖xf3! 17.gxf3 ♘e5, with colossal compensation for the exchange.

14...d4! In itself an obvious advance, but the consequences must be calculated very accurately. Some variations do not become clear until the 20th move.

15.exd4 ♖xf3 Conquering square d4.

16.♗xf3 cxd4



17.0-0

The alternative was 17.♖c1, after which 17...dxc3 18.bxc3 ♗a3 19.♗xc6 is quite alright for White. Black, of course, continues with 17...♗xa6, after which the white king remains stuck in the centre. After 18.♗xc6 ♖d8 White has no decent defence, despite his material plus. Tal calculated the following variation: 19.♕c2 dxc3 20.bxc3 ♕e5+ 21.♗e4 ♗xc3+ 22.♕xc3 ♕xe4+ 23.♕e3 ♕xg2 24.♕xe6+ ♔h8 25.♕c6 ♕xc6 26.♖xc6 ♗b7, and he wins back a full rook. An impressive bit of calculating. It was only later that he discovered that 21...♗d3 (instead of 21...♗xc3+) was a good bit simpler.

17...dxc3 18.bxc3 ♗xc3 19.♕d6 Suddenly things have stopped looking so rosy for Black. But here comes the point of the combination.

19...♖xa6 20.♗xc6 20.♖ac1 would have been strongly met by 20...♘d4.

20...♗b4 The point of the combination. White has to leave his king's bishop to its own devices.

21.♕b8 ♖xc6 22.♖ac1 White tries to arrange a pin on the c-file, hoping that this will impair Black's mobility. But as the game shows, it only gives Black more tactical possibilities. 22.♖ad1 gave White better chances of defending himself.

22...♗c5 This, too, had to be calculated on move 14. Black shields the c-file.

23.♖c2

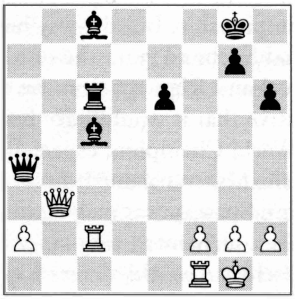
Persisting in the wrong plan. Better was 23.♖cd1, still.

23...♕a4

Black takes his queen back to the kingside in preparation for the final assault.

24.♕b3

Here 24.♖fc1 failed to 24...♗xf2+. This turn will continue to haunt White.



24...♕f4!

With 24...♕e4 Black could have reached a queen ending with an extra pawn by force: 25.♖fc1 ♗b7 26.♕xb7 ♗xf2+ 27.♔f1 ♕d3+ 28.♔xf2 ♖xc2+ 29.♖xc2 ♕xc2+ followed by 30...♕a2. This seems to me to be technically won, but Tal wants more!

25.♕g3 Enabling Tal to keep his queen posted aggressively on the kingside. Slightly better was 25.♕f3 and the black queen has to withdraw to c7.

25...♕f5 26.♖fc1 ♗b7!

Black can afford to play all these little moves because of the pin on the c-file, the point being that 27.♕b8+ ♔h7 28.♕xb7 again founders on 28...♗xf2+, and wins.

27.♕f3 ♕g5 Again, Black works with taking on f2, e.g. 28.♕g3 ♗xf2+! 29.♕xf2 ♕xc1+, and wins.

28.♕b3 ♖c7 Enforcing a weakening of the white kingside.

29.g3 ♗xf2+! The long-awaited execution.

30.♔xf2 ♕f6+ 31.♔e1 ♕e5+ 32.♔f1 ♗a6+

The poor white king is powerless in the face of this unbridled aggression.

33.♔g1 ♕d4+ 34.♔g2 ♕e4+ 35.♔g1 ♗b7 A deadly battery swings into place.

36.h4 ♕h1+ 37.♔f2 ♖f7+ 38.♔e2 ♕e4+

The hunt is done. White resigned.

A masterpiece of accurate calculation.

'Sveti Stefan? Never heard of it, mate.' That would have been the answer you'd have received prior to mid-1992, if you had asked any chess player about a certain small town in the former Yugoslavia. After mid-1992, however, it was a different matter. The unthinkable had happened – after 20 years of rumours, negotiations and disappointments, Bobby Fischer was back at the chessboard. Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam was despatched to the Balkans to track him down, and, sure enough, he 'found Bobby Fischer'.

A selfdestructive legend?

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

While strolling the streets of Budapest, an inevitable stopover en route from Sveti Stefan to Amsterdam, I suddenly recalled a remark that Lajos Portisch made over lunch at the Linares tournament a few years back. He had noted that one has to be careful what one says in the company of journalists. When I replied that he knew that there was no need to worry he had a good laugh and reassured me with a friendly, 'Yes, but you are not a journalist!' Now, in his city, it occurred to me that I must have proven myself a journalist in his eyes after all, and I wasn't so sure whether I liked it. I had visited a well-known grandmaster and, without telling him, had written down what I had seen and heard for publication. Was I tormented by compunction and remorse? No, not really. The name of the chess player happened to be Bobby Fischer.

Part of the shock that came with Bobby Fischer's stupendous return to chess was the news that, on the eve of the first match game, the Howard Hughes of chess would answer any and all questions at a press conference. Was Fischer really going to talk to the press? The scum of the earth, from whose prying curiosity he had managed to stay clear for a record two decades? Most certainly he was, but those attending his first public appearance soon found out that he only wanted to play by his own rules. Fischer chose the questions he deigned to answer and lost no time making clear that his personality had not changed materially during his public absence. Nor could there be any misunderstanding about his customary inaccessibility. He stayed in a heavily guarded and secluded apartment on Sveti Stefan, and whenever he left the island he was shielded by an impressive number of no-nonsense body guards. Chances to speak to him or even get anywhere near him seemed zero.

The one journalist I met on the spot who had had the incredible good fortune of exchanging a few words with the living legend was bound to a solemn promise not to write about them. Most other journalists I spoke to had not even bothered to consider the possibility. One of them went as far as to confide that he could write objectively better articles if he did not get to speak to Fischer. Why hurt your ego if there is no need to? So much was clear, only an overdose of good luck and unpredictable circumstances could make the ultimate dream of every chess journalist come true: finding Bobby Fischer and seeing for yourself what the enigma was like.

Fischer fever

My luck started on August 30 at 9.19 pm, when the New In Chess office received a fax from Sveti Stefan. Its contents, a request to send Mr Fischer all available Spassky games, would have been enough to create a commotion. As it was it filled the office with Fischer Fever. It was not clear who had sent the request, but at the bottom of the page there was an authentic looking 'sincerely, Bobby Fischer'.

Even two days before the start of the match, the news about the reprise of 1972 had failed to overly excite the New In Chess staff. There was certainly a buzz, but the prevailing sentiment was, 'We'll believe it when we see it. Let them play some moves first.' Even the fax could not dispel this feeling completely, but we quickly agreed that if there was going to be a match we might have a chance to actually get in touch with Fischer. Wouldn't it be great if he would work with NICBase? And wouldn't it be an undreamt-of opportunity to approach him for an interview if I were to bring him the requested articles personally?

Inevitably there were a couple of other questions to be answered as well. How safe was it to travel there? And was it morally acceptable to attend a match in a country that had been internationally condemned for starting a gruesome civil war? On the question of safety I received mainly reassuring answers. With hindsight I know that this information, while largely correct, was also simplistically over-optimistic. Travelling through Yugoslavia was mainly time-consuming, but both there and (especially) in the border district of Hungary you stood an excellent chance of being robbed.

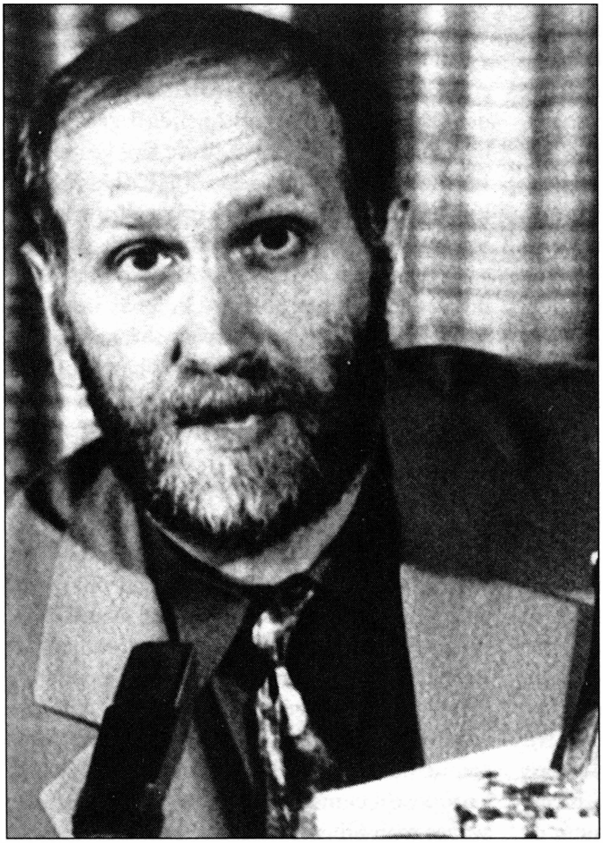
The moral question I decided to dodge for various reasons. First, because I simply did not want to miss this theoretical possibility to meet Bobby Fischer. Secondly, because I was secretly curious to visit a country that I had last seen in peace-time and hoped to get a better understanding of by talking to people there. Thirdly, because I sincerely mistrusted the motives of the people whose moral objections I heard or read about. Most of them, I was convinced, were either afraid to go to a country at war (a very good reason), or knew that from a professional point of view there was little use in going there, because there was absolutely no chance that they were going to speak to Fischer, or indeed Spassky, anyway (also a good reason, but not so easy to admit).

Fischer's complaint

Another risk to be considered was the fact that this troublesome and possibly even hazardous journey through a strife-torn country might, in the end, not yield me more than a close-up view of the muscle-bound chest of one of Fischer's gorillas. So when I arrived in Sveti Stefan around noon on Wednesday September 9th, after 26 hours of travel (from Amsterdam to Budapest by plane, then on to Belgrade by bus, then to the coast of Montenegro by plane again), I decided to proceed cautiously. Not that there was another option, of course, but my first impressions *in situ* only reinforced my misgivings. Just before half past three in the afternoon, while being kept safely away by armed guards - some of them trying to be friendly, most of them trying to look grim - I first set eyes on Fischer as he emerged from a black limousine to play the fifth match game. The haste with which he vanished and the scurrying people around him vividly reminded me of a picture in Frank Brady's *Profile of a Prodigy*, showing Fischer on his arrival for the first game in Reykjavik. The main differences were that Fischer had grown twenty years older, that here there were only two interested onlookers, and that, in marked contrast to the evidence from the Icelandic photograph, pointing a camera here was asking for mega-trouble. Nor did the situation in the playing hall create the impression that Fischer had started mingling with mere mortals. Even from the best seats in the spectator section Fischer and Spassky were two distant figures at the far end of the players' section. The big opening in the wall separating the two sections was closed off by glass partitions and a glass door after Game 6, following Fischer's complaint that he was still disturbed by the noises made by people who were sitting at least 35 metres away from him.

Hollywood

Now, at the beginning of the fifth game my view is not yet obstructed by this further whim of Fischer's, but tiny persons they remain. Hav-



The legend returns – 20 years older, fatter, balder, but still every bit the Fischer of old, both physically and mentally.

ing watched the opening moves of the game I withdraw to a quiet room next to the press room to write a letter in which I inform Fischer of my arrival. Of course, any time is convenient for me to be received by him and to hand over the material he has asked for. In the meantime it does not look as if this day is going to be a convenient one for Fischer. A bad mistake ('a lemon', as he called it himself immediately after the game) has handed over the initiative to Spassky and it is clear that the white position is rapidly going downhill. Nevertheless I see no reason to put things off and approach Fischer's second, Eugene Torre, who promises to give the letter to Fischer after the game.

The only thing I can do now is wait. Two hours later Fischer resigns and I go to have dinner. On the terrace of a restaurant across the street I bathe in the balmy evening air, watch the peaceful Adriatic below and have only one question on my mind. Have I written a letter that deserves to be framed on my return to Holland or will I regret my choice of words for the rest of my life? The beer that accompanies my thoughts makes me drowsy and as it is highly unlikely that Fischer would like to see anybody after his second consecutive defeat I go to bed early. Just as I am about to turn off the light the telephone rings and the familiar voice of Svetozar Gligoric speaks the words that have me wide awake in one split second. 'Mr Fischer was very pleased by your letter and wants to meet you now or at some other time.' Temporarily befuddled by the ease with which the invitation has been obtained I hear myself suggest that tomorrow at lunchtime might be a suitable moment. Then, quickly regaining my senses, I tell Gligoric that I will be down in the lobby as soon as possible. Downstairs Gligoric once again apologizes for the late disturbance and takes me to a car that has been waiting for us. The following scenes are pure Hollywood. Servile guards nod meekly and lift barriers as they recognize Gligoric's private driver. Smoothly he steers his limousine along the winding road that leads to Sveti Stefan. The causeway linking the rocky and heavily protected fairy island to the mainland we have to cross on foot. Climbing the cobblestones inside and greeting more guards Gligoric explains that this former fishermen's island was transformed into a holiday resort under Tito. In the meantime I try to get across that I have not only come to bring Fischer the Spassky files, but have also the vague expectation of attaining the impossible, an interview with him. Gligoric is afraid that this is indeed impossible, but gives me a glimmer of hope. He had sent Fischer the interview I had with him in Antwerp a couple of years ago, and Fischer had liked it. He might introduce me as the young man who had done that interview, but right now it was more important to install the NICBase program into Fischer's laptop.

For that purpose we first go to Fischer's computer expert, who also lives on the island. While he is installing the program Gligoric leaves the apartment to go to Fischer's place. On returning, he urges me rather nervously not to broach the subject of an interview under any condition. He had brought up the interview with himself and this had obviously spoiled the American's mood. Neither Gligoric nor I can remember the passage, but Fischer had complained that when Gligoric spoke about his chess level when they played a couple of off-hand games a few years ago, he had not been appreciative enough.

Not enough memory

So far everything has gone swimmingly, but this slight setback makes me feel a tinge of nervousness. Nevertheless I feel miraculously neutral when we finally leave for Fischer's apartment. As if someone wants to introduce me to an acquaintance of his. No more, no less (curiously enough, there was a strong delayed reaction the next day, when lying on my bed and playing my walkman I suddenly got very nervous). A cast-iron gate and another guard are the last obstacles separating us from Fischer. The guard nods, opens the gate and proceeds to ignore us as we enter the wide-open door which, a bit surprisingly, leads us straight into the sparsely lit living-room. Seated around a big square table are three persons. Eugene Torre, Zita Rajcsanyi, Fischer's Hungarian girl friend, and, yes indeed, the man himself. Fischer gets up, tall, overweight, and slightly clumsy. He tries to fulfil the duties of the host and shakes hands, but his nervously darting eyes betray his unease with the situation. This is not a man accustomed to receiving visitors. Gligoric informs him that the computer expert is installing the program and the Spassky games into his computer, but that right now he does not have enough memory for the 50,000 games package that I brought as well. Fischer repeats, almost mechanically, that he does not have enough memory. For a moment I think he is joking, but his abstract stare and toneless voice show that he most certainly isn't. Gligoric, who has already urged me to take a seat next to Fischer, now encourages me to give him the presents I have brought. First I take a stack of paper from my bag, the print-outs of the Spassky files. One containing some 1500 games, classified by opening, the other containing the same games in chronological order. Gligoric notes that the oldest game dates back to 1948. 'When you were five years old'. Fischer smiles and repeats '1948'. He is highly pleased with the print-outs and praises the clear print. He delves into them like a hungry adolescent about to wolf down a Big Mac. Suddenly there is a problem. He looks helplessly around him and notes that the pages have not been numbered. True, they have not. His voice is really loud. He repeats that they have not been numbered, observes that they should be and wonders whether the numbers should at the bottom or the top of the page. Everyone is ready to help him. Like an understanding father Torre gets up, looks at the prints and points out that there is more space at the bottom of the page. Fischer agrees and, obsessed by this practical problem, drones, 'Yes, we should number them at the bottom of the page. Yes, maybe you can do that.' There is general relief, until another aspect of the problem crops up. 'But what colour pen?' Several solutions are suggested. I propose a contrasting colour, but he quickly agrees with Gligoric that black is best, because the print is black too.

Under F

This short scene has not exactly boosted my hopes of having a normal conversation with Fischer and I am racking my brains trying to find the best approach to get him to talk. Fortunately I am given some respite when Gligoric prompts me to present my other gifts. Fischer is most pleased with the magazines and the latest Yearbook. As he starts leafing through one of the magazines, Gligoric asks him if he is willing to sign my copy of *My Sixty Memorable Games.* Without any hesitation he obliges and opens the book. 'It's in the English language', he notes. My reply is slightly off the point. 'Yes, it's the English edition, not the American first edition.' Briefly browsing through the book he repeats that it is in the English language. His autograph he enters with such concentration that he does not hear Gligoric's suggestion to add my name. When he has finished I tell him that we will be only too happy to send him the New In Chess products. He only has to tell us where to send them. 'Wait, I'll give you my address right away.' As he rummages in his pockets, I try to find a slip of paper. Until a much better idea pops up. 'Here, you can write it in the directory of my diary. Just put it under F.' Entering his address he wonders about the number of his post office box and for the first and only time he looks at and speaks to Zita. She smilingly confirms that the number he had in mind was the right one and returns to the book she is reading.

Too pro-Soviet

High time to ask Fischer whether he knows New In Chess. 'O yeah, sure.' His reaction shows that he appreciates the magazine. It is a good magazine. There is only one but. 'It's too pro-Soviet.' 'Too pro-Soviet?' 'Yeah, definitely.' He feels no urge to explain what he does and does not like in the magazine. It's just too pro-Soviet. 'Well, I remember one good piece, in which Kasparov accuses Karpov of fixing games.' Sooner than I had expected we have reached one of his favourite subjects. The never-ending Soviet conspiracy, which, together with the worldwide Jewish conspiracy, as Fischer never tires of repeating, has had such a damaging effect on his personal life and consequently the chess world in general.

Fischer is on home ground now and the hesitant attitude of the first ten minutes is gone completely. As if actually wanting to warn me of a peril of which I am unaware, he looks into my eyes and says, emphasizing every word: 'You have no idea what crooks these Soviets are. All of them.' And then he bursts into a bitter diatribe. 'All matches between Kasparov and Karpov have been prearranged. Move by move. If I have time after this match I will write a book and demonstrate that all games were prearranged. I will prove it in my book. Adorjan has written in a book that he played a game with Kasparov which they had prepared completely.' Fischer confirms that he means Adorjan's *Quo vadis, Garry?*, at which Gligoric asks him whether he knows what 'Quo vadis' means. With the shy smile of a schoolboy who doesn't but would gladly be told Fischer guesses wrong and Gligoric tells him.

But I have no wish to discuss Adorjan's writings and bring up his accusation made at the press conference that Kortchnoi, too, had fixed his matches with Karpov. That did not sound very logical. 'All Soviets are incredible cheats. They all cheat. Kortchnoi too. Even Boris.' I suggest that he must have told Spassky and that most likely he liked the allegation, but Fischer does not react. This is not the moment to make jokes. But is it not extremely difficult to prove such suspicions unless one of the players involved acknowledges such deals?

'That is just gossip, which you don't need. In my book I will prove move by move how Kasparov and Karpov did it. In a scientific manner. It took me one and a half years before I saw how they did it. When I was playing through one of their games I suddenly saw how they did it.' But what about the blunders and mistakes, I dare to object. No chance. 'Even the blunders were staged to give the match a facade of reality.'

These were the same accusations he made at the press conference. Perhaps it is time to give some examples. 'No, I will not give you any examples. I will write them in my book. I'm not going to give you an interview.' Calmly I inform him that this is not an interview as I have no tape-recorder with me. For understandable reasons I do not tell him that I intend to write down our conversation as literally as possible from memory as soon as I get back to the hotel. To divert his attention I remark that it was only during the New York/Lyon match that some people began to accuse Kasparov and Karpov of having fixed their games, but he thinks they started this business as early as 1984. Gligoric praises my agile mind and says, laughing: 'Well, you catch on quickly.' This was the comic relief I was hoping for and enthusiastically I join him and Torre in their laughter. Even Fischer manages a faint smile.

Examples

Gligoric is about to suggest our departure, when he sees that Fischer suddenly changes his mind. 'Okay, I will give you an example.' With agitated movements he starts banging out moves on the chess board in front of him. It is the 24th game of the match Kasparov and Karpov started in 1984. Having reached the position after Black's 16th move he looks at me and continues with an expression as if the following conclusion is blindingly obvious if one has eyes to see. 'This position Kasparov reached when he was 4-0 down. (With emphatic irony) Coincidentally this position was already known from a Yugoslav game between (a player whose name I missed – DJtG) and Gligoric, in which White got an advantage with 17.♖b1. (Behind me Gligoric admits that he had difficulty making a draw, with Fischer drawing out every word.) Now Kasparov thought for forty minutes, played the wimpish c4 and offered a draw.' With disgust Fischer plays the pawn to c4 and wonders, 'If that is no proof?' And there is another example he would like to show me. Energetically Fischer gets up and goes upstairs to fetch a book to corroborate his theory. Now he wants to show an endgame position that Kasparov and Karpov had deliberately aimed for. It is the sixth game from the same match. As it says in the book, the same position, albeit with colours reversed, had already appeared in a game and been analysed in depth by Ftacnik. Fischer looks at the position as if he still does not believe it. 'Chances that you get this same position are zilch. Yet, they managed to reach it by playing very badly. Kasparov even had to play the ridiculous 41.♖h5 to provoke h6. That's why he quickly played this before adjourning, because otherwise it would have been too obvious.'

> *'The problem with chess nowadays is that it is all cheating.'*

I return to the fact that he keeps accusing all the 'Soviets'. Does he really also include young players like Ivanchuk? Fischer is getting a bit tired of my incredulity. With a weary gesture of his hand he dismisses my question and murmurs, 'All of them, all of them.'

Change the rules

Despite Fischer's over-zealous attacks the atmosphere is still relaxed and I have the feeling that I would not outstay my welcome if we talked for another hour. However, Gligoric is really tired and rightly points out that Fischer should also get some rest before tomorrow's game. Fischer and I get up from our chairs to shake hands and only then do I notice the strange shoes he is wearing. Big, black laceless rubber clogs, which, combined with his somewhat clumsy way of moving about and his tall, thick-set figure strengthen the impression of some sort of monster of Frankenstein. An essentially kind and innocent person, who can suddenly lash out when he is overcome by his monomaniacal obsession. But who can also be endearingly friendly and engaging. As he is now, when we take our leave.

Slightly stooping forward he stands in front of me and with genuine interest he suddenly starts asking me all kinds of questions. Whether I play chess myself ('Are you a master or only a chess writer?') and how long I will stay in Sveti Stefan? He is all smiles as he listens to my answers and even gives a short laugh when I tell him that he and his 1972 match are to blame for my chess addiction. Then suddenly he frowns again and becomes contemplative. As if he wants to give me some food for thought for the road. 'The problem with chess these days is that it is all cheating. They should change the rules to prevent them from preparing that far.' But how can you avoid that? 'You can shuffle the position of the pieces by computer before the game.' Capablanca's idea? Maybe he did not hear my question. Fischer still seems lost in his thoughts when I ask him if he is not afraid that such a new rule might destroy the chess heritage. Again he says nothing, but the wry smile he produces is a mixture of 'why' and 'oh well, we'll see'. One final time I shake his hand, not knowing which of the Bobby Fischers I have seen will stick in my mind. As I walk down the sloping path that leads from Sveti Stefan to the parking lot, I feel pleasantly sentimental. Gligoric accompanies me to the limousine that will take me back to the hotel and once again apologizes for having disturbed me at such a late hour.

Fischer's comeback was the chess event of the year, and everybody was talking about it. Not least among the commentators was Garry Kasparov, as outspoken as ever. Over to you, Garry.

'He's an alien'

Garry Kasparov on Bobby Fischer

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

'One of my worries is the destruction of the Fischer legend. It hasn't disappeared for me and I hope that it didn't disappear for you, but it may disappear for young players like Kramnik and Lautier.' Garry Kasparov, the man whom Fischer called 'a pathological liar', reacts mildly and with compassion to the boisterous return of the eleventh World Champion. He wouldn't even rule out a match with his childhood hero, although he treats the question as a hypothetical one. 'Fischer doesn't belong to our world. He's an alien.'

'During the past fifteen years we heard so many times that Fischer was coming back, venues were announced, and nothing happened. That's why it was very hard to believe that it would happen this time. But the information we got in July from the sources around him showed that he had the intention to come back. He wanted a big audience for his views on Jews and on how Kasparov and Karpov prearranged their matches. And there was a woman, which is always a good driving force. Plus the money and the political climate in Serbia which perfectly fitted Fischer's mentality. A pariah state fighting against the rest of the world community.

'Another reason why I believed that he would play was Spassky. If Fischer was going to play it would be Spassky. Fischer would not be confident to take on anyone else.

'I spoke to many players and everyone wanted to believe that he was going to play great chess. To a certain extent we were dealing and are still dealing with people's expectations to see a big fight for the world championship. I hope that Timman and Short will not be displeased by what I am saying, but the world does not believe that a match between me and either one of them is a full strength world championship match. OK, maybe I see this wrong, because the world championship match remains the world championship match, but the general public wants a bigger event. And suddenly there was this chance. Suddenly there was Fischer. And the legend replaced all sense of reality as to what was actually happening. I spoke to some very pragmatic chess players and although they understood in their minds what would really happen, they wanted to believe in something great.'

Long-term danger

'And then there was this press conference. I knew what he was going to say, because I knew his political convictions from people who had met him. What I was interested in was the reaction of the world. I think that the general reactions were quite amusing, because people pretended just not to hear. His views were not immediately rejected because of the great expectations about his performance. If he was still a great player we might see his greatness as an excuse for his ideas and convictions. Now that the miracle has not taken place you can see that the attitude of the press is changing. I didn't think this was important, because I didn't consider him to be a normal person. It's just very sad that such a great player is living in such mental misery.

'Yes, the first game was a good game, although it gave me mixed feelings. Spassky has been playing this line for many, many years and then not taking on b3 after eight minutes of thinking? That's very, very unusual. OK, Gufeld is telling everyone that the match is fixed and that Spassky is supposed to lose. I don't want to follow Fischer's example, but the first game made this impression on many people. And when I saw the second game I thought that something was wrong with Fischer. The win in this ending was too simple to be missed. The second game proved for me that Fischer would have severe problems if he has to overcome very tough resistance. I don't know if anyone is analysing the games seriously, but in my opinion there were many ups and downs in this game. The worst thing about the games they played is the enormous number of moves dramatically changing the position.

'The things he has been accusing me of and the names he has been calling me do not affect me. I am much more concerned about the other statements. His anti-semitic remarks and his political statements, which may create a long-term danger for chess. Being actively involved in the promotion of chess, I understand that there are many places, the United States of America first and foremost, where people are going to ask: 'You are promoting chess and want our children to play chess. Now just one question. The greatest known star of the West has become a neonazi and an anti-semite. How can you claim that our kids will benefit from playing chess?' That is an important question and I think we have to prepare ourselves to deal with this problem.'

Borg

'One of my worries is the destruction of the Fischer legend. It hasn't disappeared for me and I hope it didn't disappear for you, but it may disappear for young players like Kramnik and Lautier, who will say, 'What kind of chess is this? 1972? Was this a great player?' Because he is now playing the same as he was twenty years ago. The same kind of chess. Old-fashioned chess. Like Borg playing tennis with a wooden racket. I would have preferred if they had presented Fischer with this amount of money for what he has given to chess. But not to let him play chess (laughs). Two generations have passed. He may know all the games that were played in the meantime, but he has not been growing with this chess. I belong to this world, Ivanchuk belongs to this world, even Karpov belongs to this world. Fischer doesn't belong to this world. He thinks he is the World Champion, which is absolutely correct. To my mind ex-world champion doesn't sound right. He is the eleventh world champion. And he's the undefeated champion of 1972. Let me ask you my favourite question. How many of today's first one hundred players have ever played Fischer? (Holding up four triumphant fingers when I guess wrong). Kortchnoi and Portisch, they played many games. And Polugaevsky and Hübner, who played one game each. Now that's a different world. It's not his fault. Such is life. (Jan Timman pointed out that Fischer played an exhibition game against Ulf Andersson, organized by the Swedish newspaper *Expressen,* immediately after the Siegen Olympiad in 1970. A closer look at the Elo-list and the index of Christiaan Bijl's *Die gesammelten Partien von Robert J. Fischer* helped me add five more names. Henrique Mecking (Buenos Aires 1970 and Palma de Mallorca 1970), Bogdan Kurajica (Rovinj/Zagreb 1970), Vladimir Tukmakov (Buenos Aires 1970), Vlastimil Hort (Vinkovci 1968, Rovinj/Zagreb 1970, Siegen 1970, Palma de Mallorca 1970) and, of course, Bent Larsen (fourteen games between Bad Portoroz 1958 and Denver 1971) – DJtG).'

Medellin

'I think it's a hypothetical question, but I might play a match against him. However, there are several conditions that would have to be met. Conditions number one and two are connected. The match should take place in a country that belongs to civilized society, not in Yugoslavia. And there should be legitimate corporate sponsorship. I don't think that the money with which this match is paid comes from a legitimate source. People are talking about arms deals, connections with the Yugoslav government, communist money. I don't know, but it smells. People say that five million dollars is a huge amount of money. Fine. I think that if we were to play in Baghdad, we could get more than ten million. We could go and play in Medellin and they would pay us twenty million. This is not the money we are looking for. Chess cannot be linked with criminal activities. I will not accuse Mr Vasiljevic. Maybe he's a great person. But I have serious doubts. I think this is a political game supported by the Serbian government.

'The third condition if this match were to be is that he should behave himself at least a little bit. Under the pressure of world opinion I might play with him, even if I don't care about it. But I believe that we are talking about a hypothetical question. I don't think he will play any serious games after this match. And, to be fair, I think that he should play somebody else first. I would even support the idea of a match with Karpov. Make Karpov happy. But I don't think he'll play again. He may have been the greatest player of all time. He was perhaps ten years ahead of his time. Now he's someone from the past. He doesn't belong to our world. He's an alien.'

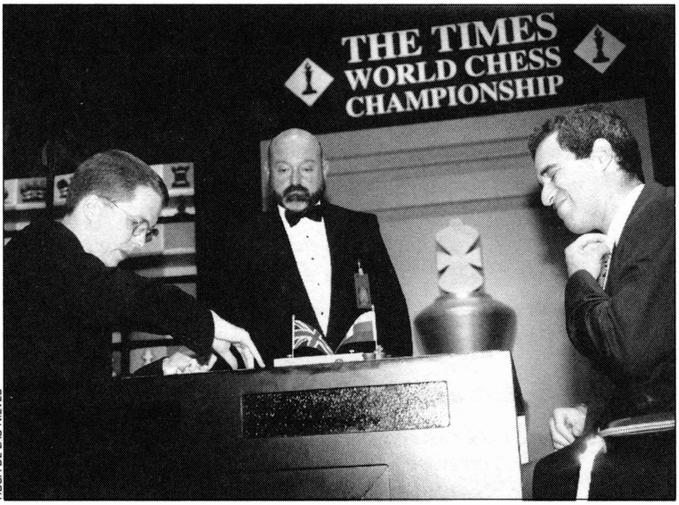
Most encyclopaedias give 1054 as the year of the Great Schism, but we chess players know better, of course. We know that it occurred in 1993, when Garry Kasparov and his challenger, Nigel Short, broke away from FIDE and announced that they would organise their forthcoming world championship match themselves. It was the start of a split in the chess world, and rival world championships, that only ended in late 2008. In New In Chess 1993/2, Hans Ree explained how it happened.

Kasparov and Short happy together

Hans Ree

On March 23 the schism in the chess world seemed complete and irrevocable. A day earlier Kasparov and Short had given a press conference in London, where they had firmly held to the position taken a month before: they were on their own now, separated from FIDE. At the press conference the new bids for their match were revealed; the match for the professional world championship, according to Kasparov and Short, a pirate's match in the eyes of the World Chess Federation. A day later FIDE announced that Kasparov and Short had forfeited their right to play for the world championship. Karpov and Timman were asked to act as replacements. Hans Ree reports on the events that brought the chess world to the chaotic state, reminiscent of the world of professional boxing, where soon two, three, or even more world champions will vie for universal recognition.

Though its text was clear enough, the fax that shook the chess world on Friday February 26 was strange and perplexing. Kasparov and Short had joined forces to decapitate FIDE by refusing to abide by its decision to hold the world championship match in Manchester. They would arrange the match themselves, by-passing FIDE. Organizers were requested to submit new offers of prize money before March 19. The bids would be announced at a press conference on March 22. All quite straightforward, but where had the fax come from? It was sent on behalf of the brand new 'Professional Chess Association', which had neither statutes, address, nor headed note paper – and just two members: Garry Kasparov and Nigel Short. Scrutiny of fax and telephone number showed where it had come from, namely from the home address of Raymond Keene, chess correspondent of *The Times*. The fax gave the name of a lady who could supply further details about the most spectacular coup in the history of FIDE. As with the telephone and fax numbers, the name given was not unknown to the British chess in-crowd – it was that of the Keene's nanny. And though she was unable to give much concrete information, it was soon obvious to the journalists that the fax had indeed been sent on behalf of Kasparov and Short.



Short-Kasparov, London 1993, in the middle chief arbiter Carlos Falcon. The offboard events proved less predictable than the course of the match itself.

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

There was deep dismay in Manchester where it was recalled with bitterness how only recently Short had had nothing but praise for their initiative. The consternation in the English chess world was also great – except at *The Times*, which next day published a leader that must be one of the most silly and bombastic in the history of the Western press. Title and sub-title was, respectively: 'Masters of their Fate' and 'Short and Kasparov have done chess a service – and more'. The message was that Kasparov and Short had not only done a service to chess but also to humanity at large. I quote: 'Today Short and Kasparov present a political message. Representing Britain and Russia, great powers which have been antagonists for generations, they have made common cause in the name of free enterprise, meritocracy and democracy'... 'Hither and thither the cry goes up for leadership. Boris Yeltsin and John Major might do worse than to emulate the spirit of yesterday's bold gambit.' Ugh!

Had Keene himself written this leader? After all he is a man of many parts: he was adviser to the Manchester organizing committee and at the same time closely involved with competing organizations which wanted to take the match to London. It was he who wrote the text for the fax which eliminated Manchester, dealt a body blow to FIDE, and put the London people associated with the TV company Channel 4 back in the running for the organization of the match. His paper, the highly respected *The Times*, was then roped in to provide propaganda for the putsch. There were English chess players, their aversion tinged with bewildered admiration, who suspected a daring conspiracy – the world championship privatized, FIDE destroyed, Manchester humiliated – just so that Keene could be on Channel 4 every day. Less fanciful observers realized that it was beyond even the formidable powers of Keene to carry out such a coup single-handedly.

Short had retreated to the U.S. and was keeping a low profile. Our editor Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam spoke to him on the phone and was told that the leader in *The Times* had been written by one of the editors, a certain Daniel Johnson, a friend of Keene's and marginally involved with one of the London organizing committees. Short stressed that he had taken the decision completely on his own. He had discussed it with his wife and his friend Dominic Lawson, but they had not influenced him. As to his motives, he explained that he had acted in an emotional outburst when he learned that FIDE had announced Manchester as the venue of the match without consulting the players. But was that all there was to it?

Picture this! While FIDE is making its mind up about where the match is to be held Short is on a boat, incommunicado, sailing from Italy to Greece. He's lounging in a deckchair in the sun and dreaming of the millions soon to be his. On arrival in Athens he hears that the purse offered by Manchester is only a miserable 1.7 million dollars. What's to be done? Couldn't other sponsors be found or something? Wouldn't London be better than Manchester? Shouldn't the rest of the world be given another chance? He talks to his nearest and dearest. He decides to phone Kasparov.

Short told Ten Geuzendam that he had been a little bit apprehensive. No wonder, considering that in the past he'd called Kasparov an 'Asiatic despot', a 'bastard', 'someone with whom normal human contact was impossible', and even (because of the world champion's body hair) 'more an ape than a man'. But he needn't have worried, Kasparov was thoroughly cordial. Short said he'd sounded absolutely delighted, that this was probably the best news he'd had for quite some time, and that they were in business in no time.

Again, no wonder! All Kasparov had been striving for for years was suddenly handed to him on a plate. FIDE relegated to the organization of amateur events and the loathed Grandmasters Association wrecked. For, according to an agreement with FIDE, the GMA was to get a percentage of the purse – money it sorely needed to survive – and this was out of the question now and would mean the demise of the GMA. Kasparov is used to political manoeuvring, but that Short, president of the GMA, was prepared to destroy his own organization must have been an unexpected pleasure for him. And moreover Short, he who had called him an ape, had, probably unwittingly, put himself at his mercy. No wonder Kasparov was pleased!

Short was then asked (in the telephone conversation with Ten Geuzendam) whether he felt guilty about giving the GMA a stab in the back. He replied that as it was now he saw no real future for the GMA and related that David Anderton (the English FIDE representative) had told him they'd never have managed to get the money from FIDE anyway. Short said he'd resigned as president of the GMA the day before the news of the split with FIDE was announced. The GMA mightn't have been in very good shape but Short certainly wasn't appointed to personally deal it a death blow. Finally he was asked if he didn't find the new friendship between Kasparov and himself a bit lacking in credibility? 'In the second World War it was no secret that Churchill and Stalin had personal and ideological differences, but when the moment was there they joined forces against a mutual enemy', was the reply.

Not that those two ever became real friends; pending March 22 when the offers were to be announced, a perfidious scenario came to mind. Kasparov makes the following speech at the press conference: 'My English friends, I can see that you'd like me to play against Short here in London, but I'm a bit disappointed in the prize money that's been offered. I'm not really surprised considering that everyone knows Short is much too weak to play against me. True, he is the FIDE challenger, but we no longer have anything to do with FIDE, because Short did away with it for me, for which I would like to thank him most sincerely. I happen to know that there are much higher prizes on offer for Kasparov-Anand. This would be a lot better for everybody concerned. Wonderful propaganda for chess in Asia! And an exciting match because I regard Anand as much stronger than Short, and he hasn't called me an ape either. The whole chess world will be grateful to me. Sorry, Nigel!'

Short wouldn't have a leg to stand on. There wouldn't be anybody left to protect him. He himself wants the teeth out of FIDE and has stabbed his own GMA in the back. He is entirely at the mercy of Kasparov's whims. Great times for the world champion. He could stipulate that 95% of the purse was for the winner of Kasparov-Short. There are dozens of possibilities, life's brilliant... It's absolutely no wonder at all that Kasparov was delighted to get Short's phone call.

I later heard that this perfidious scenario had also occurred to many of the participants at the

Linares tournament. But Campomanes – Hitler in Short's Churchill-Stalin comparison – hadn't let any grass grow under his feet. FIDE announced that it was going to take legal action against the putschists who were trying to steal the world championship, but that this would be after March 22. It is unlikely that FIDE would win a court case, but the threat of one might make sponsors who had no desire to organize a controversial pirate match back off. Campomanes took off to Spain and arranged to meet Kasparov, Karpov and Timman at Ubeda, about thirty kilometres from Linares where the annual tournament was then being held. FIDE, prepared for any calamity, has detailed regulations about appointing reserves if players drop out in the world championship cycle. In the present case, if Kasparov and Short dropped out the reserves would be Timman and Karpov. Reportedly Karpov, who severely disapproved of Kasparov and Short's actions, was keen to play Timman in a world championship match. Timman himself was more non-committal, preferring to wait and see how things developed, but he didn't rule it out. Wouldn't it be a bit weird though, a match between Karpov and Timman, both of whom had lost to Short? Timman was staggered by Campomanes's reply: 'I don't want to think about that. It's my job to stick to the regulations.' A late but welcome conversion on the part of the FIDE-president for whom in the past rules and regulations have not always been so sacred. Kasparov was cited as follows in a news agency report: 'I didn't expect anything else from Karpov. He hasn't got a reputation to lose. But Timman would be mad to lend himself to such a farce.' Possibly. I was reminded of the advertising slogan of a Dutch Insurance Company a couple of years ago: 'Better rich and healthy than sick and poor.' You couldn't really argue with that, could you? Karpov and Timman might well think the same: better to be a world champion and a millionaire than neither.

Short's expressed desire that top players join his 'Professional Chess Association' has not yet been fulfilled. Of those participating at Linares Yusupov, a member of the board of the GMA, called Short's action 'betrayal', while Salov believed that Short's sudden turnabout had completely deprived him of his credibility. There was much speculation at Linares too about a Kasparov-Anand match. Anand said he didn't think he'd be ready for it for another two years: 'But if they really did come up with tons of money, would I be able to resist the temptation?' Most of the players made no comment to the press. They didn't know what to make of the situation and were waiting for March 22, the day Kasparov and Short were to divulge their plans in London.

For one brief moment it seemed that this press conference would never be held and that the whole coup would come to nothing. A few days before the fateful March 22 I was called by Raymond Keene, whom I had tried to reach several times in vain. What was new? Keene's answer surprised me: 'Only that Kasparov has made a secret deal with Campomanes. According to our mole, who was present at their meeting in the London Hilton, the match will be held in Manchester after all, under the auspices of FIDE. As if nothing had happened, only a little more money will change hands. Our press conference is off. Short is furious. The whole thing is disgusting.' On this interesting development FIDE-sources would not comment, but Adam Black, formerly public relations officer of the British Chess Federation, suspended from that function because of his involvement with the rebels and now secretary-designate of the yet unborn PCA, confirmed Keene's story. He was very nervous. A lot of telephone calls still had to be made that night. Exciting news indeed. But the following morning everything was different. Pressure had been put on, lawsuits threatened. All the rebels were in line again. The deal between Kasparov and Campomanes was off. Adam Black now cheerfully switched into propaganda mode: 'There may have been some complications yesterday, but you must realize, Hans, that both players are terribly anxious to put up a real professional organization for chess.' Keene was not quite reassured. 'Next day we may find Kasparov in bed again with Campomanes. Sad. He used to be my hero.'

But at the press conference there was no sign of discord. My dark scenario, in which Short was ruthlessly dumped, did not materialize. Short, with a touch of Saddam Hussein-inspired theatricality, had his baby on his lap at the conference. Kasparov, not to be outdone, came up with a typical piece of rhetoric, telling the journalists that Campomanes' intransigence was due to the dark anti-Yeltsin forces in Russia, whose rise was supposed to weaken Kasparov's position. And then the highlight of the day. The envelopes were opened. Five bids were revealed. The most serious ones came from a group called the London Chess Group (2 million pounds prize money) and from Times Newspapers in conjunction with the Dutch firm Teleword Holdings (1.7 million pounds). A big improvement compared with the original Manchester bid. Kasparov and Short felt vindicated.

The next day came the expected reaction from FIDE. Kasparov and Short were banned from this world championship cycle and also from the next. The championship match organized by FIDE would now be between Karpov and Timman.

And so it seems that within a short time the chess world will enjoy the luxury of three world champions. The winners of Kasparov-Short and Karpov-Timman, and Fischer of course. And maybe more. The late lamented Hein Donner used to be known as the 'World Champion of Leidseplein', a square in Amsterdam. Since his death this title has been dormant, but now seems the time to reactivate it. I'll claim that one, I think.

He has not played a rated game of chess during the whole period of New In Chess's existence, yet few people can have influenced the chess world as much over that period as Florencio Campomanes. He has been called everything under the sun, 'the Don King of world chess' being amongst the politer descriptions. Love him or hate him, there is no ignoring him. In the aftermath of the 1993 schism, he sat down with New In Chess, and defended his record in an extensive interview.

Florencio Campomanes: 'I am ready to make my peace at any time'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

The PCA he dismisses as 'another flitting thought of Kasparov'. Individual opinions of grandmasters he cannot consider, as 'we are the federation of federations. Everything else is scuttlebutt.' In the eyes of Florencio Campomanes FIDE is still working from a position of strength and whoever doubts his conviction will have to wait for the final analysis of the FIDE-PCA conflict a couple of years from now.

My nocturnal conversation with Florencio Campomanes took place in the early hours of September 7, three weeks before FIDE had to announce that the Oman part of the Karpov-Timman match was off. Yet, his self-assured aloofness and undiminished faith in his position betrayed nothing of the President's awareness that FIDE was rushing into a severe crisis. Seemingly without a worry in the world we touched on many a subject, including 'the Secret Meeting' in Chelsea, the real reason why chess cannot be sold like tennis or golf, and the president's ability to sleep everywhere anytime. However, the recurring theme, whatever the subject, was Garry Kasparov, the 'one time *nino bonito*' who in Campomanes' words 'never really felt the authority that a boy needs from his father.'

Frankly speaking, the idea of asking Florencio Campomanes for an interview only very rarely crossed my mind in the past years. Not because I cherished any antagonistic feelings or because he had ever given me a rough ride. No, nothing of the sort. Despite his pivotal position in international chess for many years and his unmistakable involvement in some of the most dramatic conflicts in the modern history of the game, I simply never felt the urge. Perhaps, subconsciously I was repelled by the scenario that might be in store for me. Talking to a controversial personality like Mr Campomanes I might feel obliged to confront him with piercing questions to bring to light the truth in matters that so far had remained hidden. I was very much aware that in such an interview I would be no match for a dyed-in-the-wool diplomat of his stature. I would come up with clever questions only to be bamboozled by answers containing facts that quite legitimately had been hitherto unknown to me.

So, what brought about my change of mind? In fact, believe it or not, it was a rather innocuous scene that did the trick. A scene I witnessed after the press conference preceding the Karpov-Timman match. A BBC television crew looking for some casual footage asked several of the actors involved to repeat their entry into the inner court of the Amsterdam Grand Hotel. After Timman and his entourage had complied with the request, Campomanes was asked to enter from the opposite side. The Philippine president consented, but hesitated when in the corner of his eye he noticed a taxi. Pointing his finger he quipped: 'You are not going to suggest that I came here by taxi, are you?'

There and then I decided that instead of an investigative interrogation, an unpretentious conversation might render more insight into the unfathomable mystery that I had always considered the FIDE president to be. A couple of days later he reacted positively to my request and one night, while I was finishing dinner in the restaurant of hotel De Keizerskroon in Apeldoorn, I felt a hand on my shoulder. Perhaps now was an apt moment, a benignly smiling Florencio Campomanes suggested. It was close to midnight and I still had to write a newspaper report, but it just did not feel right to say no.

In Campomanes' suite I realized that I had never properly introduced myself and to correct this omission I handed him my card. A superfluous detail to mention, one might say, had it not been for the fact that Mr Campomanes subjected my innocent card to a rather bizarre treatment. While he answered my questions, either looking at me or looking in the far distance, his left hand folded, kneaded and crumbled my card!

The next day I expressed my amazement about this remarkable psychological intimidation to Jan Timman. 'Really?', he said in amused wonderment. 'You know, he did exactly the same to me many years ago. At a Bugojno tournament I had written on the back of my card where he could reach me. While we continued talking I was stunned to see that he treated my card the way you just described.'

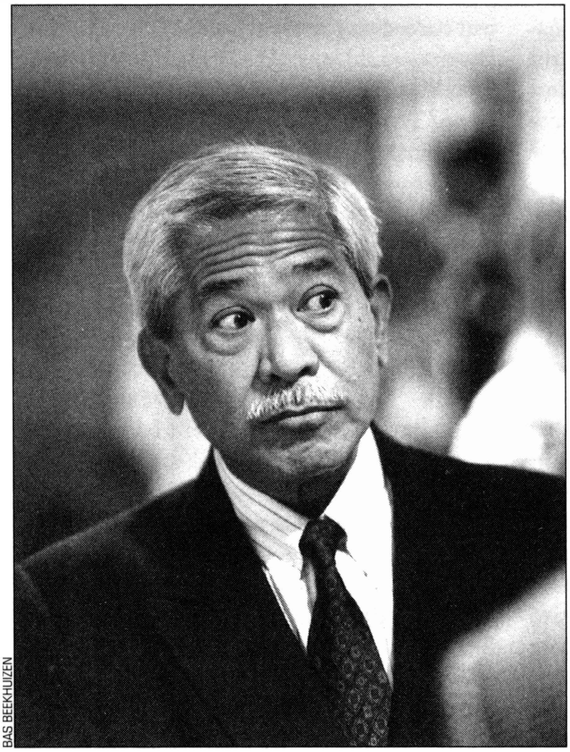
Fortunately, the fate of my card did not affect or upset me. On the contrary, I watched on in fascination. Just as I kept watching on in fascination while Florencio Campomanes dealt with my questions.

The Chelsea

– *What was your initial reaction when you heard about Garry Kasparov's plans to start the PCA?*

'You know, up to now I really have not given much deep thought to the matter of the PCA. We have so much to do ourselves. (With a malicious twinkle in his eye) But they first gave it to us as CPA. I think they then realized that these were my permanent secretary (Casto P. Abundo – DJtG) initials, so they changed it. (Laughs) That's in jest, of course. (Turning serious again) For me it's another flitting thought of Mr Kasparov and some of his cohorts. His old cohorts from '84, '85. Having lost Kortchnoi as a standard-bearer he latched on to some new dramatic person. So, that's up to Garry. I really didn't pay too much attention.

'Then came this person John Rice (Obviously referring to Bob Rice, one of the PCA's boardmembers – DJtG). I was given a copy of *Chess Life* with this interview. Somebody gave it to me to read and I said (dismissively): 'Come on.' Then I read some parts, particularly on the Sunday meeting in Chelsea. (The socalled 'Secret Meeting' on March 16, attended by Bob Rice, Kasparov's agent Andrew Page, Tony Ingham of Manchester, Ian Todd of IMG, an international sports management group that helped promote Manchester's bid for the 2000 Olympics, FIDE's David Anderton and Florencio Campomanes – DJtG) Full of incorrect statements. The paper they presented to us in the morning was not what we had talked about the night before. You have the Manchester people, who you must admit are very serious and sober people. The first thing Mr Bernstein said was: 'What is this?' (sniggers) They were trying to throw us a curved ball. Just because we hadn't had much sleep. So we wouldn't notice the difference. I could not sign that. It seemed that in the interval they had had some telephone calls and Kasparov as usual had changed his position. Which is his favourite way of explaining what other people call prevarication.'


BAS BEEKHUIZEN

Florencio Campomanes, the *éminence grise* of the chess world.

– I take it that you went to Chelsea hoping for a reconciliation...

'(Interrupts) Reconciliation is not the word. Eh, I really didn't know that I was meeting Kasparov. I went there to meet Mr Bernstein and Mr Tony Ingham, the public relations man. We were supposed to meet at my hotel, The Meridian. Which we did. And then they suddenly said: 'Let us meet Kasparov in The Chelsea.' You know me, I am not one to shirk my responsibilities, so I said: 'Fine, no problem.' I hadn't gone to London to meet Kasparov. But if he wanted to talk, fine, let's talk. Tony Ingham said that he had driven with Mr Kasparov from Linares to Madrid and then they had flown to London Heathrow together. So.

When I saw Kasparov coming and I saw his face when he looked at me, I said to myself (shakes his head): 'Mm, mm, negative vibrations.' Then he started talking and told us that he was with them. And I thought. 'Hm-hm. A new admirer of Kasparov. Has met him for the first time and is enchanted with the long conversations, etcetera etcetera.' I said to myself: 'OK, I give him some time. Maybe a week, maybe a few days.' Well, at the end of that evening he was (starts laughing) already using expressions like 'bollocks'.'

– What was the conversation with Kasparov about? What were his claims or demands?

'Well, first of all he never started the conversation saying that he hadn't been consulted by me. Because, as you well know, he never repeated that statement. Except that time in the press release. He signed that document and the impression that was given was that both of them had not been consulted. That's very clear. That is the basis of their beef. Maybe we were a little weak in the case of Short, but we exercised due diligence to consult with Kasparov.'

The Grand Hyatt

– You directly spoke to Kasparov about this matter at the time and he agreed to play in Manchester?

'He agreed to play in Manchester over the phone. I was in the Grand Hyatt in Jakarta. He was, I don't know where he was. He was, I don't recall. Oh, (relieved) he was in Linares. He was still in Linares when I called him. That was the deadline, March 4, I believe. I had told him something in Linares. When I was in Linares myself (in the final days of February Campomanes had travelled to the Linares tournament. He did not stay with the players in the hotel Anibal, but in Ubeda, a small village outside Linares – DJtG). I had called him and said: 'Let's talk.' And he said yes. The first thing he said was: 'Campo, you're always welcome.'

When I got into that suite on the second floor of what's the name of that hotel?

– Anibal.

'Anibal. The first thing he said was: 'Campo, I feel very uncomfortable about this.' Clutching his chest. Really uncomfortable. Because he knew he was lying when he said he hadn't been consulted. One of the first statements that I gave him there were some words to this effect: 'Garry, you are going to start the year that your first child is born with a lie.' I was very direct. You know how he is, he started talking about something else. But he was dealing, he was dealing with me. I don't know how he was going to reason it out with Short, but he was dealing with me. He said something like: 'I'll take care of him'. He wanted to talk to Short when he was away from his coterie. He is better to talk to when he is alone. When he is not in London. That was his feeling. That's when we came very close to an agreement.'

– Any hopes on an agreement were definitely smashed a fortnight later in Chelsea.

'After our meeting at the Chelsea's Private Apartments we were to meet again the next morning. He (Kasparov) had scheduled the next meeting. We had finished at two something and we were supposed to meet at seven-thirty because he had a nine o'clock or something plane. But in the intervening period he must have had telephone calls or direct conversations with Rice and I don't know who in London. The next morning he did not have the decency to show up. Not only with me, but also with the Manchester people. (Smiles) With me, I know him well enough to expect anything and I would have sneezed it off like the action of a petulant child. But the first reaction of the Manchester people was: (Indignantly) 'But he set this appointment. How can he?' Very good formal English people. Finally he came down and said: 'It looks like I have to do things myself.' Or words to that effect. Then Bob Rice took out a piece of paper with their version of what we had agreed on the night before. The first thing Bernstein said was: 'We wrote the text down.' The Manchester people. I don't write things down. They said: 'We wrote the text down and that's not what we have agreed on.'

– Which were the points on which their text differed?

'Well, I don't want to say so, because my memory is not very accurate. But the spirit of it was contrary to what we had agreed on. What they wanted was an immediate and outright hand-over of the entire world championship. Everything. From, I don't know, Interzonal level they were asking. Ab initio. I said (laughs contemptuously): 'I have never told you this last night. I do not have the power to do so.'

– What kind of money did they offer you in return?

'Nothing. We did not ask for money and they did not offer any. There was no money involved.'

– I thought they wanted to take over at least some part of the cycle and intended to compensate you for that.

'If they had it in mind, we didn't. And if they had they did not have it down in figures anyway. I don't like to discuss something that hasn't been on the table in the first place. But don't take my word for it. Ask the Manchester people.

(After a short pause) You know, at the time I thought that Garry at the back of his head really wanted to settle the matter in whatever way. But the people around him did not let him. As was reported later on, many people were making telephone calls to dissuade him from this. Some such words as: 'Ah, Campo will not comply.' And then somebody said: 'But Campo's track record on this is quite good. He's dealt with the GMA, he's dealt with the Russians, he's dealt with everybody and he is always ...' But then, (with a wry face) this is the same old gang of. They're actually groupies. Haha. Their hero before was Viktor (Kortchnoi). Viktor faded...'

– *You mean people like Keene...*

'You're saying that (laughs loudly).'

The Red Sea

– *Do you think the possibility to reach an agreement really existed? It was clear that Kasparov wanted to have at least a good part of the world championship...*

'You see, this would have been a second stage of a closer coordination between the players and FIDE. I think that might have been a good step forward. But these people were, I don't know, ravenous. They had been waiting for so long. They had always been at the sideline. Always wanted to be this and never been able to be this, you know.'

– *Would you accept any outside management for a substantial part of the cycle?*

'In the first place, the Interzonal they couldn't handle. Because that had already been committed. We could not give that to them any longer. We are legally liable.'

– *Kasparov toyed with the idea that even Biel might be taken over...*

'No, no, no, no. We were not willing to do that and Suri (Hans Suri, organizer of the Biel festivals – DJtG) can sue us. Garry can have all the ideas that glow out from high heaven. (Gets agitated) That's the whole problem. People who give him half the value of his ideas, which are sometimes too high-blown and are far from reality and don't have feet on the ground. That's where the danger starts. And he starts getting even more euphoric. That's bad. That's what he feeds on. He gets into uncharted waters where he has very little understanding. And that's where he gets into trouble. And then he pursues this in his own personal logic and voilà everything must part like the waters of the Red Sea. Hahaha. That's the whole problem. Otherwise Garry can be very rational and very solid and constructive.'

– *How do you see the development of your relationship with Kasparov. It started a bit at low tide.*

'(Gets agitated again) People forget that Mr Kasparov is the one responsible for the present situation to begin with. Or at least for the situation after the Manchester bid. Not because it was faulty or short or unexpected. This began because he insisted on Intermark in Los Angeles. He said 'Sure thing Campo, no problem. I am going to campaign myself in America. Take on corporate America.' Sweep them off their feet, Wall Street, Washington, New York and Hollywood all put together.'

– *Did you rebuke him for that?*

'(With raised voice) I have not rebuked him for that. All we said to Garry was: 'We've got to regroup.' Well, what can he do? He said 'I tried my best.' No, in fairness to Garry, they tried to do it in Hamilton, in Toronto, Canada. But then they were again not on sure footing there. There's a very good man there, Robert Hamilton, who did his best, etc, tried to help McKay, but then... Public sectors in America are not ready to accept the same terms and conditions for a world championship match as European or Asian countries are. They have to pin it down to brass tacks or 'What is our return on our, quote unquote investments?' So that they at least break even or make money. That is why whenever people start talking about market forces in world chess championships I just look at them and smile benignly. Haha. We've managed to get these big prizes by, haha, by kismet, by fate, haha.'

'We've managed to get these big prizes by kismet, by fate.'

– *You mean starting from the London/Leningrad...*

'No, starting from Bobby's extra money from, what's the name of the Englishman?'

– *Jim Slater.*

'Jim Slater. That was kismet. That was good luck. That somebody came forward and gave 125,000 pounds. That was not corporate advertising or public relations. It was not a public relations effort. He didn't do that because he wanted to display his name in the chess columns. Then came the five million dollars offer of the Philippine Chess Federation which never got to be given, because Bobby didn't play. But that established the benchmark. That was the benchmark. Not only for Bobby, but for all the others. That was the benchmark to look at and say: 'Ah, chess can get five million dollars.' And that is one of the reasons, well, one of the reasons, why we have been able to sell, quote unquote, world championships to some sponsors. Or the government sector. (Looks quizically) Where did we go after that? Ehm. After that we got it in Manila, in Baguio, for five hundred and fifty thousand dollars.'

– *This was government money again.*

'We got some of that money back from private sponsorship. But of course with government advice.'

– *But what do you want to say?*

'You see, that is the first prize from 125 and then to 250 thousand because of Slater. And then up to five hundred. A big jump. Then after that there was a little drop, I think, at Merano. And then after that we raised ourselves, minimum, a million. That is why, of course the '84 match and the '85 match were played in the Soviet Union. But then after that we got the London and Leningrad match. And the Sevilla match, 2.7 million. And then after that 4.1 million of New York and Lyon.'

– *You mean to say that corporate sponsorship or one global sponsor is not the answer...*

'I'm not saying it's not the answer. It could be the answer. But where is it? (Laughs questioningly)'

– *The rumour is that now the Intel company is backing the PCA cycle.*

'Which? The match? (A bit contemptuously) They are not paying the money. It's the London Times who are paying the money.'

– *Yes, but Intel seems to have taken an option on the forthcoming cycle.*

'Oh, be my guest. If they have it, wonderful. That picks the cup in the lip. We'll see.'

Ratings

– *OK, but we were in Chelsea. Was this the end to your efforts to talk to Kasparov?*

'No, no. After that we agreed to meet the following Sunday in London again. I had an intervening appointment and sure enough on Saturday evening, instead of coming to London on Sunday for lunch, I came the night before and had some talks with some people. And that's when Mr Kasparov didn't show up. That's all. That's when Mr Rice came around and said nothing more than driving his ultimatum. And I smiled and said: 'Be my guest' (chuckles). After that there was no communication.

Then we send communication to them concerning their, eh, (hesitates), eh, plan to play a match and so to confirm it and if they do not confirm it within a period of time, then we'd consider that in accordance with the Executive Council we will withhold from them the services of the ratings.'

– *This I didn't understand. First there was this press release saying that if they were to continue their efforts to hold this match then FIDE might...*

'No, not might. Will.'

– *To me it seemed a bit premature to take away...*

'(Interrupts angrily) No, what's... If somebody tells you they're going to... You're not going to wait for them to stick the knife into your jugular. And then say: 'Ouch, you really did it'. (Laughs). It was a correct document we sent them for them to answer. That was the letter of the resolution as proposed by Mr Makropoulos. And read out to the board and written down.'

– *Is it true that Mr Makropoulos was much more in favour of this measure than you were?*

'(Curtly) What?'

– *That he was much more in favour of withholding their ratings?*

'I don't know, but that's what he said. And he double-checked what he said. We had it on tape and he said: 'Aha, that's what I said, so we have to stand by it.'

– *Mr Makropoulos threatened to strip them of their ratings...*

'No, no no. We never threaten. We just said, the Board said, that if you play this match, then, again, I don't have the text as indicated in the document, but words to that effect. If you don't play the match tell us 'no'. If you don't reply to us.. And there was no answer.'

– *Did you ever regret this robbing them of their ratings?*

'(Utterly amazed) Who? Regret? Excuse me. In the first place I don't think you should phrase that question in that manner. I don't regret things that I do officially for FIDE. This was the proper thing to do. What do you want us to do? Wait for a Munich pact and get ourselves disrobed?'

– *No, but I could imagine...*

'Why? They no longer want to be with us. You want us to, as I said, wait for a Munich agreement and lay ourselves prostrate before them. Huh? I never regret anything I have done officially for FIDE.'

– *Were you surprised that this turned out to be one of the touchiest things...*

'(Still on his high horse) What? I don't know what you are talking about being touchy. (Highly irritated) You're talking about only a certain limited area. Of the rest of the world only four federations have written to us.'

– *Well, you're talking about federations...*

'That's all. That's all that is important to us. We're the federation of federations. Everything else is scuttlebutt.'

'What do you want us to do? Wait for a Munich Pact and get ourselves disrobed?'

– *Of course you're also interested in the opinions of leading grandmasters. What they think.*

'(Looking for the right punishing answer) But... excuse me. Mr Kasparov and Mr Short are not complaining about it. I don't know why others are complaining about it. (Giggles) If they complain, fine, let them write a letter. Then maybe we will consider it and take it up seriously. But scuttlebutt from people, tsh... haha. The British Chess Federation has written to us and we have answered them that this is the procedure etcetera. And the only proper venue for this is Curitiba, the Congress (the forthcoming FIDE congress in November in Brasil – DJtG).

'Regret? Come on Mister (briefly looks at the crumbled card in his hand), when we do things, we do them properly. We do them legally. We do them within the statutes, within regulations. And what can we do? We must implement. People start writing that we banned them from playing. We didn't ban them. They extricated themselves out of FIDE.'

– *The only thing I am referring to is the discussions following their step. There were people in favour and people against. But there was some general opposition towards... (almost made it to the end of my question)*

'What general? What do you mean in general?'

– *Grandmasters. Amongst grandmasters.*

'(Reproachfully) Have you counted? What is general? How many grandmasters do you have? That's the whole problem with some sectors of media. They generalize and use terms like 'general'. What general opposition? What are you talking about?'

– *If you speak to grandmasters and none of them supports this...*

'I beg you pardon? How many grandmasters are there?'

– *Three hundred and fifty or so.*

'How many have you spoken with? What is general? Be careful with your terms. We just keep doing our work and that's all that is important. If we listen to every little, to every, every, person who has the capacity to write a good article, we'll have no time to do our work.'

– *Yes, but...*

'But what? Don't you stand and say 'general' and if you stand you got to back it up.'

– *But you are a democratic body...*

'(Decides to interrupt again) Excuse me, what is it? Of course, we are. If say, we received thirty, forty letters from federations, it's serious. But the other day we received from the United States Federation a statement and an opinion on this matter. How many weeks late? (Laughs contemptuously again) Fine, we'll table it and introduce it in Curitiba. Together with New Zealand and the British Chess Federation, they were the only federation that has sent us a letter.'

– *You prefer to speak about federations. Now, suppose there were forty letters of protest sent by grandmasters. Would you care?*

'(Indignantly) Where? Where is it? Don't give me suppositions. Where is it?'

– *OK, you know that grandmasters are not going to send these letters.*

'Because you are making speculations on a speculation. That's the problem in many cases. Don't speculate on speculations. Keep your feet on the ground. You get into less problems. Then you really can assess the situation better. That's why I have no problems sleeping.'

Abraham Lincoln

– *Now FIDE is keeping its feet on the ground...*

'We keep our feet on the ground. We have our structure intact and in good working order.'

– *But do you think that FIDE is working from a position of strength in these matters?*

'We are. Definitely. You will see from our documentation in Curitiba. The number of letters of support from the federations all over the world. From individuals etcetera. And scarcely an opposition to our move in the case of Mr Kasparov. Mr Kasparov. In the initial stages of his world championship career, they say in Spanish, he was a *nino bonito.* A good charismatic great player. But then as time went on he of course started throwing brickbats in my direction. I didn't bother or answer to any great extent. Let him talk as he wants. Because in the end truth will come out. Wasn't it Abraham Lincoln who said, or words to that effect, that even if one thousand angels vouch for you and it's not true there is nothing you can do about it?

'(After a brief pause he suddenly changes the subject) But, let's not talk about all this, but come to a very essential point that is all too easily forgotten time and again. Very few people see it and it's this. I should be the first one not to say this but actually I am the first one to be very loud and clear about this. This has to be understood before we can move forward. Everyone says: 'Let's make the money that golfers make. The money that tennis players make. The money that football players or snooker players make, etcetera. (Waits an instant, then almost whispers) It's not the same. The susceptibility of those sports to television is very clear. The value is instantaneous. Because all that the audience needs to do is to see the ball go into the net, go into the hole, go into the pocket or stay within the lines. That's just one mental operation. One optic nerve to move and they see it's a point. And because of that there are viewers. When there are viewers they attract advertising material. The ten-second commercials, the fifteen-second commercials. And that is what the television stations get their money from the sponsors for. And then they sell and sell and sell and that is why they are in turn able to pay these sports.

'But chess requires at least one more if not many more mental operations before the audience actually understands it. I thought at one time that because of the development of the sensory board we would make a very fast breakthrough on TV. I said so in public. I was naive. It isn't. It is not the only thing that is necessary. The people who see the pieces move have to understand why the knight doublechecks and why the queen... How many in the given population of a hundred thousand actually can understand this that quickly?

'(Emphatically) We are not yet at that stage. That is why it is not easily possible for us to get the same reception from television and from other media. We should have a much broader acceptance at the base, the so-called consumer public. We have to work on this and this is why FIDE has not even touched the tip of the iceberg. That is why all of us should try and work together to get the television audience we want or the population chess-educated.

'(In a soft voice) That's the whole problem of chess today. It's not Kasparov. It's not FIDE. It's that. We must do more work. I don't care what organization, but since we have FIDE, it's FIDE.'

Channel 4

– *Are you impressed by the number of hours that Channel 4 is going to dedicate to the London match?*

'(After a slight pause) BBC is going to dedicate 34 programs. Is that Channel 4?'

– *No, it isn't.*

'Good. I always say, if anybody regardless pushes chess one inch forward it rebounds to the benefit of the world of chess and therefore to FIDE. If one more extra person sees a chess game and decides because of that show to go to the bookstore the next day and buy his chess book. Anything. And we have a lot of work to do. It's a human society and we will quarrel. But we must not lose sight of our objectives.'

– *Is it very annoying to be president of the world* *chess federation when the best player in the world is lacking?*

'(Grins to himself) We didn't worry about it and I will not worry about it. The whole chess world in 1975 firmly believed that Fischer was the gift of God, the gift of Allah, of every holy spirit in the universe. And beyond the universe. He disappeared, we survived, and we did more than Bobby could have done. So, what are you talking about? No-one is indispensable. No-one. Including myself'

– *What about your own position? Are you planning to run again at the presidential elections in Thessaloniki next year?*

'(Feigning amazement) Why are people so interested in my running? I am just doing my work. Everybody is politicking. One year and three months to go and we're already talking about the next elections. We have a three month period in which to campaign. If one decides to run, all right, declare yourself. If you don't declare yourself, all right. There are many others. No one is indispensable.'

'We keep our feet on the ground. We have our structure intact and in good working order.'

– *Is it still an open question for yourself?*

'I don't know. You're a better man than I am. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, do you? If you don't and I don't, why do you ask me about next year? (Laughs)'

– *You will have some thoughts.*

'(Sternly) I am entitled to some thoughts to myself. I don't wish others to invade my privacy.'

– *But you also are a public person.*

'I'm a public person? Excuse me. Every public person is entitled to his privacy.'

– *Yes, but...*

'What do you mean 'but'. If I were to ask you what you plan to do next year, could you tell me?

– *Maybe I couldn't, but I might.*

'But I won't ask you. It's not my habit to ask people what they will do next year.'

– *What are your thoughts about this match between Karpov and Timman? Are you happy about this match?*

'You have two fine practitioners of the art. Excellent practitioners. Been on the scene for a long long time. Respected grandmasters. A ten year World Champion and Jan is a fair-haired young man of European chess. I see it this way, there was Larsen and then Jan kind of took over his mantle. I've seen Jan play some beautiful chess, but then I also have seen him play some erratic games. If he kept his level consistent for 24 games he certainly could have the possibility to beat Anatoly. In any case, it's a match between two gentlemen exponents of the game. Which is something that may not be easily said of other such events. This is something very important. You have thousands of kids looking up to the world championship and if they see that somebody playing up there behaves atrociously, either by word or by deed, it's appalling. Sometimes that is the more valuable and lasting facet of chess that should be remembered in evaluating decisions.

When you look back on this five years from today, two years from today, as now you look back to '85... Let me ask you, what did you think of '85? And what do you think of '85 now? Without my decision in February '85 we would not have any of this. Mr Kasparov would not be a multimillionaire. And wouldn't be as arrogant as he is now.'

– *You claim that it was your decision to stop the match and your decision alone?*

'That's right. No-one can look me straight in the face and tell me that it was not my decision.'

– *There was no-one prompting you? No pressure at all?*

'No, you know better than that. No-one pressures me. What can you pressure me with? Death? (hahahaha) Even that. (With his head averted) They know that they cannot... no-one threatens me. I am ready to make my peace at any time.'

– *You mean you believe in God?*

'That's none of your business.'

– *(Trying to pick up the thread again) Over the years you have been subjected to lots of hard or rude criticisms...*

'But in the end. In the end... This harsh criticism has come from people who have not been properly informed. Some of them have not even talked with me. Or have not even seen me. They wouldn't recognize me if they saw my picture in the newspaper.'

– *When does it really sting?*

'(Vehemently jumps at the question) Aaah, I have an explanation for that. They say that I have a catalytic effect. Such that out of a feeling of the listener or the beholder, they can't understand me. Or there is something mysterious about me. Or that I always have second thoughts. They somehow mistrust me. But in the end when they really get to know me they see that I am about the only person in many areas who keeps his word. (With a raised voice) What will hurt is when it's true.'

– *But this doesn't happen?*

'It doesn't happen. As far as chess is concerned I have still to meet anyone to tell me straight in the face that I have done ill. Or I have not kept my word.'

Cup of tea

– *Do people have a chance of getting to know you if you're so very protective of your privacy?*

'You see, I don't bother to explain myself. I'm not the fellow to explain himself. I just do my work and that's all. Because this business of having coffee or drink with the boys, this is not my cup of tea. I don't have to explain myself.'

– *Do you think that you're above that?*

'Yes, yes. You've heard me on the platform, you've heard me in congress, you have heard me when there is need to explain a point or to clarify an issue, I do it to the best of my ability. But just words, cheap talk, I don't indulge in it. Much worse, I don't indulge myself in cheap gossip. Which is sometimes the fodder of much literature.'

– *The way you look at things, the way you go through life, gives the impression that you feel disappointed by many people's attitude.*

'Oh no, it doesn't bother my sleep. (Laughs) I always believe that the measure of a man is not the popular conception. That popular conception is not based on intelligent perception. Otherwise I would not have been able to do a stitch of work.'

– *Are you addicted to working hard or can you imagine retiring and...*

'I'm very conscious of duty. Whenever I have taken on a responsibility or duty I want to do it well.'

– *Do you explain this from your upbringing?*

'Well, I had a very well-bred father. He was a doctor of medicine. And a good old school disciplinarian for a mother. That stood me in good stead. And I had some very good professors in the university. And the more they made us work the more we hated them during the course. But we loved them so much after.'

– *And that is something you hope Kasparov may think in ten years time?*

'Well, Kasparov is a hard worker. I grant you that. He deserves some of the rewards he has gotten to this hour. It's just a matter of direction. My tentative explanation of Garry is that he's never really felt the authority that a young boy needs from his father. The impression at the age between four and ten. Probably that is one of the reasons why he has always been unmindful or suspicious of authority. Sometimes, in small dosage that is good. That opens some new areas of thinking and sometimes of achievement. But an overdose of it can overthrow the applecart. Don't forget that he could have done beautifully with the GMA. Bessel was a good partner for him. But I don't know. It just didn't work. Bessel gave him just about everything he wanted.'

– *You feel affection for Kasparov despite all the things be has ever done or said?*

'Oh, this is just another phase of a dialogue. I never carry grudges. I leave them at the doorstep before I go into my bedroom and sleep well. I can sleep anywhere anytime. In a chair. In the daytime. With noise, without noise. With people, without people. I'm at peace with myself and that's the important thing.

'So, people are going to pressure me? What can they pressure me with? (laughs self-assuredly) Pressure you with physical harm or financial ruin? Or social ruin? What's the meaning of all this? Death? (laughs) That's something that comes in any case. Financial ruin? I can live with the barest of things.'

– *You have experience with that?*

'I have experience with that. During the war.'

– *You believe that as for the FIDE-PCA confrontation the final analysis will be made some years front now?*

'Everything will have a final analysis. Come now, don't give the PCA too much importance. Everything has a final analysis. The PCA, huhuh.'

No worries

– *Still, you expressed clear worries when you addressed the FIDE Board in Athens.*

'Worries? Worries, only as far as the work of the Board is concerned. No worries, never.'

– *Worries about the strength of the position of FIDE.*

'We said that in order to stress the actual damage done by Mr Kasparov when he pushed his Intermark and we lost two years. Now we're supposed to pick up the pieces. That's why we had this time constraint with Manchester. And we had a time constraint before that. Before that there were only two bids. What has not been stressed is that we only reopened the bids because Mr Kasparov asked us to reopen the bids. Because they were not just happy with Santiago de Compostella. Which was a Kasparov-bid allegedly, which he was later not supportive of. That's part of his cargo. Then we had this bid of Vasiljevic when he wanted to give his guarantee from his bank, which was a guarantee that our bank didn't want to accept because of the boycott.

'The only one that came with a full-paid guarantee was Manchester. So, what are they talking about that we did not give them a chance? (Exasperated) There was only one bid at the time. Only Manchester and if you will the one of Santiago de Compostella. The other bids were up in the air. Here comes a bid from IMG/Channel 4 and what do we get? We didn't even get a signature from IMG. What are they talking about? Fact was that Mr Short had earlier information that it was going to be a three million pound bid and it never materialized because of some late developments from the sponsorship. That's not our fault.

'It's all very clear. What did Page tell me after Mr Kasparov broke away: 'Yes Campo, I will tell you, we had not been thinking about this. But this should have been done the proper way. Proper preparation, etcetera etcetera. Here we go with a public confrontation and we don't have anything ready.' That's Andrew Page. I don't know. Was he consulted by Garry or not? Maybe Garry had other advisers. I don't know.

'No one is indispensable.

No one. Including myself.'

'So, that's the real reason. Such things can happen in any human organization and we take it in our stride. The important thing is not to be rustle-tousled by this. As we have never been in the past. We had many crises in the past. We just keep our balance and just see what we can do about it. Not fail to do your daily routine and move forward. The moment you miss one step one day you get into the habit of missing more steps. That's when the trouble begins. You must keep doing your work, because others pause, others stop. And you just keep on moving.'

Amongst the great tournament traditions of the New In Chess era, Linares stands out. The annual gathering of the world's chess elite put the name of this small Andalucian industrial town on every chess player's lips. For much of the period, it was a Kasparov benefit event, but every now and then, he would be displaced from his Linares throne. In 1994, his old rival Karpov did so, and in a style which marked it as not merely his own greatest tournament victory, but just possibly the greatest such victory by any player in history.

Anatoly Karpov: 9 wins 4 draws

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Impervious to worldly worries like relapses or off-days, Anatoly Karpov reached for an extraterrestrial 11 out of 13 to win the category-18 Linares tournament. With nine wins the FIDE champion contributed liberally to the unprecedented 63.7 per cent of decided games. An improbable percentage, which made the 12th Torneo Internacional de Ajedrez Ciudad de Linares the most memorable edition ever in the eyes of the blood-thirsty Don Luis Rentero. What better tribute could his fourteen lions have made to the gravely afflicted workers of Linares, who struggled to avert the closing down of the local Suzuki plant, the main employer in the region?

Returning to Linares is returning to an environment that has grown so familiar that within a couple of hours you have long forgotten that you have been away. There you're sitting again in the Restaurant Himilce, called after the girl from Linares who, legend has it, captured the heart of the Carthaginian conqueror Hannibal.

Hannibal, who Luis Rentero named the hotel after that he built six years ago to house his chess tournament.

Indeed, at first sight nothing much has changed. Kasparov takes his meals in the company of loyal aides Dvorkevich and Makarychev, Karpov talks to his faithful second Podgaets, and Gata Kamsky listens to his father Rustam. There are a few newcomers. There is Veselin Topalov, together with his manager and trainer Silvio Danailov. There is Judit Polgar, together with sister Zsuzsa and mother Klara. And there is Joel Lautier, who likes to sit with the Russians. With Bareev, Gelfand or Kramnik. Not only because he speaks Russian, but also because he finds that the Russian players talk more openly about chess than their Western counterparts.

For the rest everything looked much the same. Sadly enough the traditional 'flan' had been replaced by a more fanciful version due to an overall upgrading of the menu. Several new dishes had been introduced that sounded appetizing in Spanish, and simply mystifying in English. A special prize should have gone to the great unknown, whose fertile mind produced the translation of the menu every day. Who would not be beguiled by modern classics of Linares cuisine like Roman Cork Float, Supreme of Indian Bird or Grilled Salmon in a Seaman Like way? Not to mention the already legendary Cook Dish with Tur or Bar Snacks of Mere and Salmon. Yet, nothing much had changed. Fernando, the headwaiter, still took the orders. Juan still blushed endearingly when the restaurant was filled to capacity on weekends and the pearls of sweat ran down his stern visage, while in the evenings Diego, with the aristocratic features of a retired toreador, often lent a helping hand. As always the restaurant was an oasis of rest for the players after they had inched their way through the throngs of autograph-hunting children in the lobby, who this year had grown more persistent and, sorry to say, more bad-mannered than ever. Perhaps the main change was the expression on Fernando's face. Sure, he was as helpful and friendly as ever. Yet, in spite of his smiles his brow always seemed slightly clouded. Fernando was one of many inhabitants of Linares who wore a green ribbon pinned on their chests, to show solidarity with the workers of the Suzuki-Santana plant. Chess featured prominently in the local press, but all through the tournament the leading articles had only one concern: the imminent closure of the Santana autoplant, the biggest employer of Linares. Two thousand four hundred jobs were under threat, which, given the thousands of people indirectly dependent on the plant, would effectively mean the economic death of the entire town. Every day there were rallies, strikes and other forms of protest to avert the impending economic catastrophe. Six thousand men and women sat down on the palmfringed paseo, the inevitable goal of many a grandmaster's stroll. Trains and roads were blocked. And battle songs were sung, ending in typical Linares fashion: 'Lucharemos, Venceremos, Con Honor' (We will fight, we will win, with honour). Yes, the Linares people are known for their fighting spirit. As one expert revealed to me: 'That is why in Linares they play chess. In all the surrounding towns and villages people play cards.'

Inevitably there were calls for general Franco to come back to life, and banners suggesting bombardments on Japan. The situation was so grim that the owners of the Chinese restaurant next to the hotel Anibal thought it wise to inform their prospective guests that they were Chinese and certainly not Japanese.

To show that his heart was with the workers Luis Rentero was quoted in the newspapers as saying: 'I would line these Japanese managers up in front of the town-hall and feed them to the mob one by one.' To stress that he was playing to the gallery he later added: 'When I said that I had 25 Japanese executives staying in my hotel.'

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

Nine years after losing the world title, Karpov produced one of the greatest tournament results of all time.

Under the circumstances a festive opening dinner was out of the question. Instead, all grandmasters signed a letter of solidarity with the workers, which was read out to the Santana representatives by Miguel Illescas. Some of the players also wore the said green ribbon during the rounds.

Is this Linares?

The ongoing negotiations between the trade unions, the Spanish government and the Japanese owners of the factory almost eclipsed Anatoly Karpov's unique victory in Linares itself. In all probability his streak of wins must have left distant observers more bewildered about what was happening in Linares. Even Karpov himself may not have been quite sure. As the Muscovite proceeded to his sixth win in a row, one fellow-grandmaster noted: 'He sits there with an air of surprise. Wondering: 'What has happened to my colleagues? Is this really Linares?' Kasparov's answer to Karpov's six out of six start was a barely less impressive five out of six. Yet, the expected gripping neck-to-neck between the two K's was never really on the cards. Particularly after Kasparov failed to turn their 163rd clash in the expected epic encounter. Instead, he could count himself happy with a draw as Karpov dropped his first half point when he missed a unique opportunity as early as move 13.

It was a weird situation for Kasparov. He was playing strong chess and was still on schedule to equal his record scores of the preceding two years. Yet, he was also trailing Karpov by one full point. Perhaps the final blow came one day later. Having achieved nothing tangible against Shirov (or vice versa, one might say, as Shirov was White), Kasparov waited in his suite for the moves of Gelfand-Karpov to be transmitted by his aide Dvorkevich. In the position Kasparov had seen when he walked off stage, Gelfand had enough left of a close to winning advantage to save an easy draw. In his suite he had to receive the disconcerting news that even this had not been enough to stop Karpov from winning his seventh game.

Karpov had become larger than life. He had had his windfalls in the early rounds, particularly against Lautier and Ivanchuk. Now he had every reason to complain that he missed wins against both Shirov and Kamsky. His sole relief was Kasparov's failure to profit from his slips. Playing a line he said he mysteriously had forgotten to play against Karpov's Caro-Kann, Kasparov duly routed Kamsky in Round 9. However, one round later Kramnik, of all people, doused his last glimpse of hope. Fighting with ingenuity Kasparov had created good chances to save an awkward position, when he moved his king into a minefield. Kramnik executed his threat and needed only one more move to clinch his first win over his former master.

In Round 11 both rivals still vied for the most brilliant game of the day, although the real fight had been decided. Kasparov pushed aside Anand's Sicilian with a strategy that gave us a taste of the future. While they sat analysing wonderful variations, Kasparov's gleeful mood was temporarily spoiled by the arrival of Karpov and his opponent-of-the-day Kramnik. Kasparov's short aside 'What happened?' was duly answered by Zsuzsa Polgar with a succinct 'Karpov won. On time.' Kasparov slowly repeated her words and quickly returned to his own game.

In fact, it was worse than that. Karpov did not simply win on time. He strategically outplayed Kramnik in one of his best games.

The moment Kramnik overstepped the time he was paralysed by the choice of moves that he could not get himself to play.

Kasparov's misery was completed in the final round. Lautier celebrated his first game against his great example with a flashy win, while Karpov concluded one of Beliavsky's most miserable tournaments with a drastically brief victory. Of course, Kasparov's result could not be called bad. In fact, he made his expected score according to the 2800 Elo he had been given to make the tournament category 18. Nevertheless his total inevitably paled before Karpov's once-in-a-lifetime TPR, a few points short of 3000. Elsewhere in this issue you can read the opinions and views of Karpov and Kasparov. Here we will give some space to the also-rans, preceded by the annual winner of the Linares tournament, the inimitable Luis Rentero.

Russian championship

Rentero's evaluation of his twelfth tournament was a happy one: 'A hard-fought draw is worth as much as a win, but still this is the best Linares tournament ever, given the highest percentage of decided games.' A further reason for deep contentment was Anatoly Karpov's win: 'I am very happy with his win. I have seen him suffer such a lot in my house. Our friendship only brings him trouble. Even when I organized the Candidates' semi-finals here he lost to Short.' Nigel Short was one of the two players whose absence Rentero was quite willing to discuss. He firmly denied that personal reasons played a role when he did not invite Short or Salov. 'In Salov's case, the reason was his showing bad taste. Every year the players in Linares are presented with a beautiful commemorative plaque. When Salov moved out of his house here in Linares he left the three plaques he had behind the door. He could have taken them with him and thrown them out of the car somewhere. Anything. But he should not have left them there as an insult.'

Rentero clearly enjoyed Short's case more. 'Short has said that he doesn't want to play here because he doesn't want to play in the Russian championship. Alas for him the best players are not Portuguese. I admire him as a player, as he is a player who fits in the Linares tradition. The only thing he has to say to be invited back is to say that he is willing to play in the Russian championship.'

The only regret Rentero had about the players he did invite for this year was about his giving in to the pressure to invite Judit Polgar. A regret that is solely prompted by his fear that she may suffer from the seven defeats she ran into. 'I invited her under pressure from journalists of *El Pais*, *Marca* and *AS*. Now I am sorry that I gave in. Seven losses are bearable for a fighter like Timman, but a woman is more fragile.'

Rentero felt he should have known better, as he remembered the time he invited Maya Chiburdanidze to Linares: 'She got ten zeros and it took her more than a year to recover. After the rounds she would cry and I felt pity for her.'

The 1994 incident

Rentero's mention of Judit Polgar takes us to the incident that kept players and press occupied this year. In other words: The 1994 Linares Incident. An incident, which in true Linares fashion was blown up out of all proportion. What was it all about this time? To begin with it may be useful to describe what happened as clinically as possible. In Round 5 Judit Polgar played Garry Kasparov. On move 36, in mutual time-trouble, Kasparov picked up his knight and transferred it from d7 to c5. Having put the knight on c5 he suddenly realized that he was making a blunder, saw that 36...♘f8 was not a blunder, and moved his knight there. What was not clear, is whether he had released the knight when he put it down on c5. At least, this was not clear to the majority of people watching the game. For Judit Polgar there was no doubt. As she stated repeatedly after the game she saw Kasparov leave the piece before he quickly withdrew it to f8.

There was only one problem. Uncertain about the situation, Judit Polgar looked at Kasparov, turned to her mother and sister in the audience with a questioning look, but did not make any protest. She played her move and that was it. That is, that might have been it if it had been a lesser mortal than Kasparov who played the knight to f8

From that moment on there are several actors in this soap. There is Judit Polgar, who states unambiguously that Kasparov let go of the knight and that she is shocked that he of all persons corrected his move. There is Garry Kasparov, who declares to the present writer that he does not believe he released the piece, but that everything went so quickly that he cannot be one hundred per cent sure. Fortunately there is also a camera crew who filmed the game. Unfortunately they have left for Madrid, where they originally came from.

Five days after the incident Rentero adds new fuel to the fire when, although a private conversation, he declares that he has spoken to one of the filmmakers from Madrid. This man watched the video of the game and concluded that Kasparov did let go of the piece. By now Kasparov gets fed up by the insinuations which are actively stimulated by Roman Toran, the president of the Spanish Federation, and a good friend of Karpov's. Kasparov approaches several people, including your reporter, to come to a general demand to have the video shown in order to put an end to all speculation. Also he asks for a private talk with Rentero to express his annoyance with the case. The result of this talk is an open letter written by Rentero in the best Linares tradition.

Press release

Luis Rentero, Technical Director of the Chess Tournament 'Ciudad de Linares', informs of the press media that the comments concerning the

5th round game between Mrs J.Polgar and Mr G.Kasparov, occurred in the following way:

I was close to the mural of said game, and right when Mr Kasparov moved his knight to the c5 square to leave it there for a few seconds, without releasing his fingers from the piece, he returned the knight back to its original square, d7, from where he moved it to square f8, I turned to the referee saying, Carlos, whereupon he answered: he has not released the piece!

The referee has the main responsibility in the Playing Hall and his decisions are accepted, not only by me, but also by the Organizing Committee of this Tournament. Consequently, as responsible of this Tournament and in the name of the Organizing Committee I do not admit other versions of the referred fact and we will not permit speculations or comments of bad taste towards the Organizing Committee since they have accepted the referee decision, as main responsible of the Playing Hall.

Having information that on Tuesday, March 15th, a video of this case is intended to be projected, I would like to inform that neither in the Tournament Hall, nor at the Anibal Hotel, nobody will be allowed to make such projection.

To me, as Technical Director of the Tournament, Mr Kasparov is an exemplary sportsman, that has not required of any tricks, to be three years the winner and two years second of this world renowned Chess tournament.

This Tournament has been, is and will be a good faith Tournament and we will not permit that nobody spreads unfounded rumors, that all they do is to damage the reputation of the players and even of this Tournament.

Luis Rentero Suarez, Technical Director

Apart from the fact that it was not yet sure that Kasparov was going to finish second in the tournament, this letter did little to help his case. Any sane person reading the letter could only conclude that it was written to cover up that Kasparov did release the piece. Confused? There is more to come. Despite Rentero's warning the filmmakers from Madrid arrived in Linares the next day. With the long-awaited video. 'They surely must have been invited by Toran', seemed a good guess. 'No', my Deep Throat was kind enough to tell me, 'They are here at the invitation of Mr Rentero.' 'But didn't he..?' I stammered. 'Ah,' Deep Throat smiled, 'you still don't know Mr Rentero. He just wants to have some noise, as he told several people in the lobby of the hotel one hour ago.'

And so, on the day of the closing ceremony, the video was secretly shown to a select company in one of the rooms of the hotel Anibal. One of the viewers was Carlos Falcon, the chief arbiter. His conclusion was unambiguous and honest: 'When replayed in slow-motion, the video clearly shows that Kasparov released the piece. However, as he capped the piece with his hand, it was impossible for me to see this from the position where I was standing.'

Isn't it wonderful to have clarity in these matters? At least now I knew that it had been Kasparov/Karpov/Toran/Rentero who had been opposed to/in favour of showing the video.

Some of the others

Practically all through the tournament Karpov's and Kasparov's tables were separated by the player sitting centre-stage, third-prize winner Alexey Shirov. The central position of the Latvian dare-devil seemed a just reward for his imaginative play. Practically every day he enthralled the spectators with fantastic brainwaves and unusual strategies. Yet, you have to be careful with your praise. Shirov himself failed to find any consolation in his result for his ill-starred performances in the cycles. 'In fact, I am more upset about my chess here than I was in Groningen. In Groningen I had no energy and played reasonably well. Here I played just horribly.'

Neither did he get overly excited by people's admiration for his highly personal style. 'It's just the way I understand chess. Of course, I could play better moves sometimes.'

The good thing was his first experience as a married tournament player. All through the tournament he was accompanied by his wife Veronica, whom he married in Buenos Aires in January. 'I was not sure whether I could play a good tournament being together with my wife. It seemed not to be a problem. In fact I was more relaxed and not as nervous during the games as I normally was. Especially during my games against Kamsky and Kramnik. I was not too nervous against Kramnik. I was trying to create difficulties for him and then I even won that game.'

Another unfortunate Interzonalist who bounced back in Linares was Evgeny Bareev. Even though he started with a 'terrible game' against Kasparov and another loss against Karpov. 'The ultimate result was not so important for me. Last year I didn't play really bad tournaments. I finished them badly. I started with many, many wins in a row, I would lose a game and then I could not even play. The main result of this tournament was that after my two initial losses I could play quite well. You must play every game at approximately the same level. You should not react too heavily to a win or a loss. This was what I managed better.' Just like most players Bareev saw no reason why the hierarchy in the chess world should be revised after Karpov's baffling win. Although he was quick to add that he is certainly most impressed. 'Firstly, Karpov actually played well. Secondly, if we started this tournament again, he would probably have plus-five again. The players here are young and they are unstable. They can play one game well or even excellently. Karpov always plays steadily.' Still, Bareev did not find that we should attribute too much importance to this result. 'No, this was just a bad time for Kasparov. It will be interesting to see if he can come back to his old level. Actually, I didn't think much of Karpov as a chess player. Now I think he is a really great chess player. I knew his results in Baden-Baden and in Dortmund and I was wondering 'Why?' Now I know why.'

Youngsters

Although he had no revolutionary changes in mind, Rentero wanted the 1994 edition to be a tournament of the young. Regrettably, Michael Adams felt not in the right frame of mind to make his debut after his Candidates' loss against Gelfand, but two youngsters, Joel Lautier and Veselin Topalov certainly proved their worth. Surprisingly, Lautier did not feel any negative after-effects from his match loss against Timman. 'The fact that I lost that match didn't upset me that badly. I was very upset right after the last game, but after the match I didn't really believe that Timman showed anything spectacular. He didn't show to me that he was stronger. I was really looking forward to prove that I have my place in the world top. When I came here I had this incredible wish to play. And when I feel this I know that usually things go well.'

Linares seems custom-designed for a fighter like Lautier. 'Oh, yes, it is, absolutely. There is really no other tournament like this. This is my first time here and I am really thrilled. When I arrived in the hotel I could feel that something was happening. Just feel it in the air.'

Obviously, his win against Kasparov in the last round turned a reasonably normal tournament with its ups and downs into a very good one. 'Of course, this game against Kasparov changed everything. All through the tournament it had been at the back of my mind that in the last round I had to play Kasparov. In certain games I didn't play things because I wanted to keep them for Kasparov. My mind was focussed on this one game. I was quite tense before the game. When I started to play all of this disappeared. For me he is clearly the best player in the world and the most interesting player. Just playing him was extremely interesting. I just wanted to fight. The only thing I wanted was to play a game up to my abilities. Not some stupid game. There was this point when he played ♕b5, which I had calculated to be losing. When he played ♕b5 I took ten to fifteen minutes to quieten down. I just couldn't believe it. I couldn't make a move.'

Despite this win and Karpov's first place, Kasparov remains the undisputed number one for Lautier. 'If only for the fact that he is the most interesting player. Karpov is this incredible playing machine who wipes out opponents if they are not very careful. I am still stunned by his performance.'

In half an hour

Vladimir Kramnik's win over Kasparov did not tap new sources of energy to challenge his former teacher's second place in the overall standings. 'No, my problem was that I felt very bad physically. I was afraid that I was going to play very badly towards the finish of the tournament. Especially when I got a cold. I probably spent my last strength in my game against Kasparov.' The next round he had no answer to Karpov's theoretical novelty. Yet, this defeat was nothing compared to the misery he felt after he had misplayed a completely winning position against Shirov in Round 12. 'I played well until my game against Shirov. That was just a disaster. I was feeling very bad physically, but still, such a position you can win when you are about to die. In such a position you don't need to think. Instead of third place I took this shared fifth and sixth place. Third place in such a tournament behind Karpov and Kasparov would have been really good. The thing that upset me most, what was most painful in this defeat, was that I had worked for half a month and then in half an hour I lost everything. If I had been on plus-one and lost this game it wouldn't have been such a big deal, but now... ' After the game Anand tried to console him with the question whether he would rather have won his game against Shirov than be a Candidate in two cycles. Kramnik's answer was clear: 'My answer was that I preferred to have qualified in both cycles and to have won this game.' On the day of the sober closing ceremony, which happened to coincide with his 19th birthday, Veselin Topalov showed a much broader smile when he looked back on his Linares debut: 'I am very pleased with my result, or rather with my games. I played good games, except against Karpov and Bareev. My game against Karpov was a nightmare.'

Topalov came to Spain, where he lives six months a year, in 1991 at the instigation of his friend and second Danailov. A string of successes in mainly open tournaments turned him from a 2460 IM into a 2640 GM. Linares was not just another Spanish tournament for the young Bulgarian. 'This tournament is different from all the others. I think this is the best Linares tournament ever held. Very few quick draws. We had one excellent player here, Karpov, with an outstanding result, and all the others were fighting.'

As he sees himself first and foremost as a fighter, Topalov enjoyed every bit of it. And he learned a lot, although this is difficult to explain. 'I don't know what exactly, but I will find out.'

Missed opportunities

Gata Kamsky held a sober, self-critical view of his third Linares tournament. Far from elated about his own performance and friendly about his opponents. 'This was a big, strong tournament. I didn't play well, I played badly. Actually I didn't like any of my games. There were always some missed opportunities. Apart from that my opponents played very interesting chess. You may have noticed that with every tournament here I have been doing better than in the previous one. So, if I will play more of these tournaments I may end in the top of the ranking one day.'

His overall conclusion was brief and clear: 'The tournament was fine and everything was OK.' This laid-back approach was not shared by Kamsky's next opponent in the FIDE-cycle, Viswanathan Anand. Linares '94 was an abysmal torture for Alexander Beliavsky, Michael Adams' last-minute replacement, a severe disappointment for Vasily Ivanchuk and Boris Gelfand, but certainly no joy for the Indian favourite either. Anand's encouraging 3 out of 4 start disguised his true form, or rather the absence of single-minded dedication to the event, as he fully realized himself after Lautier had woken him up in Round 5. Perhaps Rentero had a point when he exaggerated Anand's lack of bloodthirstiness in one of the national newspapers: 'The principles of Gandhi are good for many purposes, but they don't suit a sportsman.' Anand was not too pleased by this sneer: 'It's a tough tournament to play without being completely motivated. Let's say I was a bit tired after my match in Wijk aan Zee and the tournament in Groningen. These were events I took very seriously. I came to Linares fairly reluctantly. I would have much preferred to take a rest at this point. Since I had already promised the organizers that I would play I thought it would be very unfair to drop out at the eleventh hour. I hoped to make a sort of decent showing. Perhaps in the end it worked out as something of a decent showing, but obviously it was a miserable tournament for me.'

Still he denied that playing both cycles and having a normal tournament life is impossible. 'No, it's not. It's just that you have to think about it. It's not trivial. I came here without any specific ideas about the tournament. I was not really ready for all the competition and the work that would go with it. It's a question of preparing yourself mentally.'

Completely destroyed

Miguel Illescas analysed his result with the ambitious realism he is famous for. 'I am not satisfied of course. Minus-four is not a big deal. I know that this tournament is the strongest in the world and I know that I was the lowest rated player. But I have enough experience in this kind of tournament to have a better result.' Spain's number one seemed to be set for disaster when he followed up his Round 1 win over Judit Polgar with six losses. The plus-one score he made in his final six games gave him some satisfaction. 'I never lost six in a row and I never lost eight games in one tournament. In the Barcelona World Cup I lost seven games. I particularly remembered the day I had to play Beliavsky. From the previous rounds I had a terrible result. I was White and I went to that game completely destroyed. The only time in my life I remember I was completely destroyed. I thought I was going to lose easily with White. And then I made a draw. When I played Beliavsky here after six lost games I thought of that game and I won.' The four games he won certainly boosted his morale. 'I remember the beginning of my career. It was not so difficult for me to make a draw with the best in the world in 1988, '89. Only in the last years did I begin to win. For me to have 4 wins in this tournament is much more important than 8 draws.'

It seems to have become a tradition that Illescas only plays Linares in the odd years. Much to his regret he was not invited last year. He had just come second after Karpov in Wijk aan Zee and felt more ready than ever. 'I was in my best form. It was a shock when I was not invited. ' By way of compensation Rentero immediately invited him to play the annual Anibal match against Ljubojevic and invited him for the 1994 tournament. In 1992 the Spanish Chess Federation had to pay one million pesetas for the participation of the country's strongest player. It is a topic that Illescas prefers to steer clear of. 'I heard the Federation are going to give one million pesetas again. I don't care. It's not my business. I'm really tired of all that.' Judit Polgar did not feel too much regret that the tournament was over. For her it had not been the big challenge many people held it to be. 'It was nice that they invited me, but it wasn't that special. I also see category-14 or 16 tournaments as challenges. In any case I can always play better. I think I got a lot of experience from this tournament, even though I paid dearly for it.' In no way does she share Rentero's worries that she will suffer from the experience. With a dismissive smile she promptly reacts: 'No, not at all.'

The turning point came, incidentally, in Round 5. 'In my third and fourth games I had some chances to win. Of course if my game against Garry had been different the tournament would have been different. 'After the scandal everybody was asking my opinion and calling me. I am not used to this kind of scandal. After that I should have played more solidly, I pushed too hard.'

NOTES BY

Anatoly Karpov

SL 9.9
Anatoly Karpov
Vladimir Kramnik
Linares 1994 (11)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗d3 a6

Some rounds before our game, Kramnik played 8...♗b7 against Bareev. White's answer 9.a3, led to an endgame-like position. Kramnik made a draw, but the game didn't give him much satisfaction. He had also beaten Kasparov in the previous round and now, inspired by this win, he was aiming for a sharp game against me, too.

9.e4 c5 10.d5 c4 11.dxe6 fxe6 After 11...cxd3 12.exd7+ ♕xd7 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♖e1 Black has to fight for a draw. **12.♗c2 ♗b7**

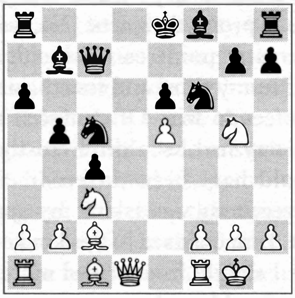
12...♕c7 followed by 13...♗d6 is considered the more fashionable continuation, but since I rarely play the Meran with white, Kramnik decided to lead the game into forgotten territory.

13.0-0 ♕c7 14.♘g5

White must hurriedly look for activity. If he does not bring his lead in development to bear, the active pawn structure and the open files and free diagonals guarantee Black the initiative.

14...♘c5 15.e5!

15.f4 is also possible and acceptable to the theory. Essentially, White's idea is not new; when you have a lead in development, open up the position. However, in this particular position this move is rarely seen. As Kramnik said afterwards, he could remember only one recent game in which it was played this way.



15...♕xe5! After 15...♕c6 16.f3 the bishop-queen battery serves no purpose, while Black's kingside is in an awful state.

16.♖e1 ♕d6 17.♕xd6!

This has never been played before! For some reason everyone reasoned along the traditional lines: when a pawn down, don't go into an endgame. But it is precisely in the endgame that White has a huge initiative and that Black's pieces lack coordination totally. What used to be played was 17.♗e3.

17...♗xd6 18.♗e3

We reached this position with a 14-minute difference on our clocks. It was only here that Kramnik sank into thought, for no less than fifty minutes. And it is true that it is hard for Black to find a decent move. 18...♘d3 fails to the simple 19.♗xd3 cxd3 20.♖ad1, and Black will lose both pawns. After 18...b4 White may play 19.♗xc5 ♗xc5 20.♘a4, and subsequently take on e6 with the rook or the knight.

18...0-0 19.♖ad1 ♗e7 20.♗xc5 ♗xc5 21.♘xe6 ♖fc8

Everything is forced. Black cannot sacrifice the exchange – 21...♗b6 – in view of 22.♘xf8 ♖xf8 23.♖e6, and the bishops become vulnerable.

22.h3!

White could also fight for a small advantage after 22.♘xc5 ♖xc5 followed by 23.♖e7 or 23.♖e6. But the text-move is much stronger, because it is clear that not only are Black's rooks messed up, but his queenside pawns are stuck as well, and even the mainstay of his position, knight f6, is coming under threat. White's original plan also involves moving the pawns away from his own king, without fearing the opponent's bishop pair!

22...♗f8 After 22...♗b4 White may continue 23.a3, forcing Black to give up the bishop (otherwise 23...♗a5 24.♘xg7 ♔xg7 25.♖e7+).

23.g4 h6

If 23...g6, then 24.♘xf8 ♖xf8 25.♖e7 is very unpleasant.

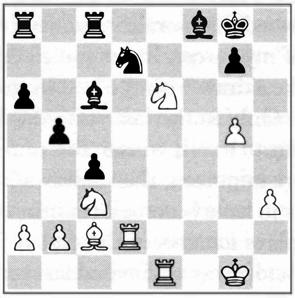
24.f4 ♗f3

It is useful to drive away the rook from the first rank in order to create a possible pin along the e-file.

25.♖d2

25.♖d4 was tempting, and if Black continues with the standard 25...♗c6, then after 26.g5 hxg5 27.fxg5 ♘d7 28.♖h4 the black king suddenly comes under a mating attack. However, the consequences of the pin after 25...♖e8 were not entirely clear to me; Black is threatening 26...♖xe6 27.♖xe6 ♗c5, along with the immediate 26...♗c5.

25...♗c6 26.g5 hxg5 27.fxg5 ♘d7



28.♘xf8

White had two alternatives: 28.♘d5 ♗xd5 29.♖xd5 ♘b6 30.♖d4, possibly creating mating threats, or 28.♖f2 (with the idea 29.♗g6), after which 28...♘c5 is impossible in view of 29.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 30.♘xc5. True, after 28...♗c5!? 29.♘xc5 ♘xc5 30.♖e5 Black gets some chances of saving himself after 30...♘d3 31.♗xd3 cxd3.

28...♘xf8 29.♖d6 b4 30.♘e4

30.♘d5 was possibly even stronger; it forces Black to give up the bishop, leaving his king and knight in a terrible mess.

30...♗e8 31.♘g3!

I had great expectations of this move. To avoid the worst, Black has to give a pawn, as after 31...♗d7 32.♖e7 ♗xh3 33.♘h5 White's threats become unstoppable, and otherwise the knight penetrates on f5 with decisive effect.

31...♖d8 The only move.

32.♘f5 ♖xd6 33.♘xd6 ♗g6 34.♗xg6 ♘xg6 35.♘xc4 ♖d8 After 35...♖f8 36.♖e4 ♘f4 37.h4 ♔h7 38.♘e5 is also killing.

36.♖e4 b3

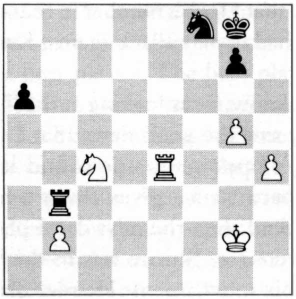
This looks like desperation. If 36...♖d3, then 37.♔g2, followed by h4-h5.

37.axb3

37.a4 was even stronger, preserving the pawns on the queenside. After the game Kramnik showed me 37.a3, but I think this is slightly weaker than 37.a4.

37...♖d3 38.♔g2 ♖xb3 39.h4 ♘f8?!

In time-trouble Kramnik makes the decisive mistake. 39...♔f8 was more persistent, although the position remains difficult after 40.h5 ♘e7 41.♖e5 ♔e8 42.♖c5.



40.♖e8!

This move came as a complete surprise. Black had forgotten that 40...♔f7 is met by 41.♘d6+, protecting the rook! As if paralysed Kramnik watched his flag falling.

Anatoly Karpov: 'Now I can say that I am the best player of the moment'

Looking back on his stupefying explosion, Anatoly Karpov remembers that it was actually Don Luis Rentero himself who first hinted at a super score. Gratified by his first two victories he wondered why Karpov could not win his first six games. Karpov duly obliged and finally finished with an unprecedented total of nine wins. Yet, he declines to see his FIDE-title in a different light. 'I don't understand this obsession with the world championship. Who is FIDE champion and who is PCA champion.' To Karpov's mind we need a new approach. A world champion he will always be. The only accolade he claims now is 'The Best Player of the Moment.'

– *After Tilburg you took a break that was almost similar to the kind of break you usually take before a world championship match. Except for a friendly match against Morovic that you won 5-1 you virtually stayed away from chess. Was this Linares tournament that important to you?*

'No, I didn't have any special preparation. My good fortune was that after my match with Morovic I spent five days away from chess. Away from anybody. I went to the south of Gran Canaria and was just lying on the beach in the sun, alone at the ocean. This was very good for my nerves. I left there five days before this tournament. This was a very important part of my preparation. Just to do nothing. As for my chess I mostly relied on what I did last year. When I played all these tournaments and especially when I prepared for my match with Jan (Timman). So, evidently we did some good work.'

– *When did you get the feeling that things were going even better than you could have expected?*

'It's interesting, but I had a clear feeling at the drawing of lots. Normally you are a little bit disappointed if you pick a number in the second half. This means one extra black game. Moreover, I drew the black colours against Kasparov. So, two negative emotions during the drawing of lots. Still, I had no bad feelings. I was neither disappointed that I took a number in the second half nor that I had to play Black against Kasparov.'

– Why?

'I don't know. I was looking at the list and immediately saw the good news that I would get Kasparov's opponents one round later. This is good, because he gives them a hard time (laughs). And then the next day I play against them. Of course, Shirov was in the best situation in this tournament. He met players who had just played Kasparov and me. Actually he proved how good this position was.

'The first game against Lautier I played quite well. I had pressure and under this pressure he made this big mistake. People just reported that I was lucky in this game, but it was not as simple as that.

'It was no coincidence that Lautier made this last mistake. He felt uncomfortable in many variations and then he overlooked the simplest one. This may happen when you defend a position for a long time. Suddenly you don't like one continuation, then another, and finally you make a move that loses even faster (laughs). This was a good start. In my second game against Bareev I had a long fight and then in time-trouble he made a mistake.

'Already two out of two was a very good start. Then Rentero approached me in the lobby. Many people were around. He is always very emotional about victories. He said if you can win two games, why can't you win six games in a row. He was the first who said this. I won my third game and my fourth and then six. In fact, I even could have won more (laughs).'

'I got some problems when I had played Kasparov and beat Gelfand. I got a little bit tired and missed these easy wins against Shirov and Kamsky.'

– Somebody who observed you in the early rounds said that it looked as if you were surprised by the ease with which you scored your points. As if you were looking around you thinking: 'What has happened to my opponents? Is this Linares?'

'No, I didn't have this feeling. I was just playing. Actually I was the hardest worker in this tournament. I played all my games to the full and had two adjournments. Many games of five hours. I probably spent much more time at the board than anybody else.'

– Were you ever overcome by fear that you might collapse like you did in the Rotterdam World Cup when after a tremendous start you inexplicably lost your three last games?

'Yes. Even now I cannot explain what happened in Rotterdam in those last three games. Probably my nervous system collapsed. There was one moment here that I thought about this. When I missed the win against Shirov. Then I got the feeling that I must remain very alert so as not to repeat Rotterdam. I had these thoughts and I was more careful in my next games when I was calculating variations. And more careful in spending my time.'

– People often suggest that sportsmen should stop at the peak of their careers. You regained the FIDE world title, you beat Kasparov in one of the strongest tournaments in history. What drives you on?

'I don't know. I like chess. It is very easy to decide for somebody else. It would leave an emptiness in my life. I like to play chess. I like to see people in the chess world. So, why stop? Of course, this would be a great moment to stop. Just to say: 'OK, goodbye', (laughs) I don't want to see you anymore.' But this is not true. I like the chess atmosphere.'

– Do you also need it? The tension of tournaments. The kick of winning them?

Yes. If I stay away from chess for one month I feel that I miss something. I want to play. If one day you decide to stop completely, life is over.'

Additional Motivation

– Does it surprise you that you have been playing so well in the past year? Is there any explanation for what people call your second youth?

'I don't know. Yes, last year was extremely successful. I only lost this decisive game against Kasparov in Linares. I was too active in this game. I felt I had good chances to win the tournament, I had White, so I took risks. Then I lost the game. Otherwise I won almost all tournaments with very big scores. Dortmund, Dos Hermanas and Tilburg at the end of the year. One of the most successful years in my life.'

– Are you especially motivated by the current situation in the chess world? This rivalry between FIDE and PCA?

'Maybe. (With a telling smile) Maybe this also creates some additional motivation.'

– The other day in the press room Ljubojevic was comparing the current situation to the one in 1975. He argued that the moment Karpov gets a world title for, let's say, free, he feels a tremendous urge to prove that he indeed is the world champion.

'Mmm, mmm. Of course, the situations could be compared.'

– How long did it take before you really felt world champion after Fischer refused to play? When did you prove it to yourself?

'I felt that in the absence of Fischer I was the best. I proved it. It was not my problem that Fischer stopped playing. What could I do? If somebody stops playing he can't claim the title for himself for the rest of his life.

'Immediately when this match didn't happen in April, I played in Ljubljana/Portoroz in June and I won nicely. Next I played the Milano tournament in August. In this tournament almost all the best players played. When I won this tournament everybody stopped talking.'

> *'Can you say, Fischer was world champion in '73, '74 and half of '75? Of course not!'*

– How were your feelings this time? Did you feel world champion after the last game in Jakarta?

'No, but this is not the right approach to the problem. I think that only in chess you have this strange discussion about the world championship. It would be better not to speak about the world champion, but about the best player of the moment. Once you get the world title you have it forever. In history you are world champion, like you are president of the United States. Nobody says ex-president of the United States, Richard Nixon. Or ex-Olympic winner Mark Spitz. It is Olympic winner Mark Spitz. And it doesn't matter if it was '72 or '76.'

– People do say former president Nixon...

'No, normally they just say president. As they say Olympic winner Mark Spitz. Nobody says ex-Olympic winner Mark Spitz. This sounds stupid. You must speak of the best player of the moment, of the year. As Fischer became world champion, Botvinnik became world champion, they are world champions. Botvinnik is not the best player now, but he is still world champion.'

– You mean he is 'a world champion'.

'Yes, and apart from that you can talk about who is the best player. The best player of the moment. When I won in Jakarta I could not say to myself that I was the best, because Kasparov was still there. Now I can say that I am the best player of the moment. Because I won this tournament where everybody participated. Now it has been proved. Of course, in Jakarta I could have said that I was one of the best. Kasparov and me, we were the best. It was still an open discussion who was the best. Now, because I was playing much better here, it's quite clear.'

– How long do you remain the best player of the moment?

'Till the next possibility occurs when we play. We might play a match, I don't know. But for the moment it's quite clear.'

– This whole question of FIDE and PCA world championships doesn't really bother you?

'Not too much. How shall I put it? I'm not jealous. I was always saying that Botvinnik is world champion. That Spassky is world champion. Fischer is world champion. What is the problem? Kasparov is world champion. This is not a problem for me. I never said that only I am world champion and all the others who are no longer active are stupid. This is not a problem for me. I don't even have the wish to explain this to anybody. I am world champion in the FIDE system and Kasparov world champion in the PCA. I think this is just ridiculous.

'I don't understand the discussions, you know. You have two systems. One is the winner of the one system, the other is the winner of the other. In other sports you can find many such examples. For instance, at the Olympic Games in Barcelona, Sergey Bubka, one of the greatest pole vaulters, failed and another one won the Olympic title. He was the best one, even though Bubka had all the world records. Maybe twenty centimetres higher than the Olympic record. Still this other pole vaulter was the winner. So what is the discussion about?'

– You mean the world title is comparable to an

Olympic medal. If you win it it doesn't necessarily mean that you are the best.

'Right.'

– *This deviates from the idea that always existed in the chess world. People have always been obsessed by the idea that the world champion should be the best player.*

'This is not necessary. Why? This was not always the case. For instance the last years that Botvinnik was world champion. In tournaments Keres was better, Tal was better. And many others were better. Botvinnik was just more successful in matches. He was regaining the world title, because of the matches. In tournaments he was weak. He won many Soviet championships, but in international tournaments he was weak. Another example. Spassky lost the match to Petrosian in '66. But from '66 to '69 he won almost all tournaments he played in. Petrosian won maybe one or two strong tournaments. So how can you say Petrosian was the strongest in '68 when Spassky won everything? Even with Fischer. He took the title, but then stopped playing. Can you say he was world champion in '73, '74 and half of '75? Of course not. It's a discussion without end. But not a very serious one (laughs apologetically).'

– *In Jakarta you said you didn't feel the urge for a unification match or whatever one might call this. The one who needed this match more was Kasparov.*

'(Broad grin) Now he needs it even more.'

– *To what extent do you need it?*

'I just wait, you know. I await serious proposals. Now he needs it much more than after Jakarta. This is quite clear.'

Trapped

– *Which did you think were your best games here?*

'I won a very nice game against Topalov. This was probably my best game. And my game against Kramnik. The final position is easily winning. That's why he didn't know what to do. He was trapped. He looked at the clock and saw that his flag was about to fall. Then he looked at the position, but he couldn't find a move (laughs).'

– *And which did you think were Kasparov's best games?*

'Kasparov's best game? Probably against Anand. But Anand told me he didn't play well in this game. He shouldn't take the bishop on h5. Then, I must look. (Takes the playing schedule and sums up Kasparov's opponents) Maybe his game against Ivanchuk was good. Illescas, not good. Kamsky played very badly. Bareev was in the first round. OK, possible. Not a very good game, but possible (laughs). I think his games against Anand and Ivanchuk.'

– *Last year Kasparov said that Linares was the tournament of the players. The tournament where the players take stock. Could you give an assessment of who you think is who in the chess world after this tournament?*

'At the press conference after last year's tournament Kasparov said that this is the real world championship.'

– *Well, he called it the unofficial world championship.*

'Yes, yes (laughs). It would be interesting to ask him again this year. How he feels about this tournament.

'This tournament showed that Kramnik and Shirov are already real top players. Of course, like everybody, Ivanchuk is disappointed with his performance here. This is not his level and not his style. He must have collapsed in the first rounds. After he lost to Kasparov with black and to me with white. Then, it's clear that Anand is one of the top players. So, in this tournament the ranking is as it should be.'

– *What about Kamsky?*

'In this tournament he didn't play his best. He lacked confidence. For him it's not easy, because he is alone. Probably he lacks the right approach to work on chess more successfully. He needs guidance. When he was still in the Soviet Union he had no real trainer or good friend to help him. He left the country at the age of fifteen and he is absolutely alone in the United States. Working on his own. Probably because of that he has his problems from time to time.'

– *And Judit Polgar?*

'Judit Polgar didn't show her best, but this was her first experience in a very strong and tough tournament. Here you have to work every day with full energy. In the other tournaments she played you may have your occasional short draw or weak opponent to have some rest, but here you have no weak opponents. She could feel it right from the first round when she lost to Illescas And then she collapsed after her game with Kasparov. She lost four or five games in a row. (She scored half a point from her next five games

– DJtG) Probably this incident demoralized her completely.'

Video

– *What do you think should have been done about this incident Do you think the organizers should have shown the film rightaway?*

'I don't know. These things are difficult to prove. Maybe we came to the best solution in Gijon, when I had a similar case with Yudasin. He claimed that I left the piece. I was absolutely winning. Five pawns up or something like this. But in rapid chess it's easier just to stop all this arguing. We just agreed to replay the game. There were players who said that I hadn't released the piece and there were two journalists who said I had released it. Most players said I hadn't. And then Yudasin and I had the same idea almost at the same time. He said: 'Why don't we play another game to decide who is the winner in this situation?' Here they had videos, so they could prove it. But the situation is very difficult to solve, because they were both in terrible time-trouble. If you interrupt the game this will always be to the advantage of one side. Of course, the arbiter should be more careful and stronger. But then... It is my conviction that in chess the arbiter is not sufficiently protected. It is not good that players can dictate to organizers who should be the arbiter of a tournament and who cannot be. Then the arbiters always depend on the players, especially on the top players. Could you imagine Falcon stopping the game and saying: 'Mr Kasparov, you left your piece, you must lose the game?'

– *You insinuate that he could not do this. That this conflicted with his interests. Why couldn't Mr Falcon step in and stop the clock?*

'He is the chief arbiter of the PCA. What do you think of his PCA activities (starts laughing) if he had stopped the game and said: 'Mr Kasparov you made a terrible mistake but you must execute the move you made.'

– *Do you find that you can say these things openly?*

'Why not? I have had many such problems in my matches with Kasparov and I talked openly about this. In London, in New York. When the arbiters didn't want to act according to the rules. In London there was this problem with the rest rooms. When Kasparov passed through the press room on his way to the rest room. In New York we had this problem with this non-existing flag of Kasparov.'

– *Suppose it is proven that Kasparov didn't release the piece. In that case there would not be any blame on Mr Falcon.*

'If it is proven that he didn't release it, then OK, then he was right. But it was the opposite. Some journalists said they saw the video and they also saw photos from the video of the moment. It is quite clear.'

– *Why don't they show these pictures?*

'They want to sell them. They showed them privately and I think they showed them to Rentero as well. But they don't want to show the tape publicly because they want to sell it (laughs heartily).'

– *Your conclusion is that there are too many mixed interests in the choice of arbiters. Just like when Kortchnoi did not accept Baturinsky here as an arbiter in '89.*

'I think that arbiters should have a commission of arbiters, just like we have a commission of players. FIDE should pay much more attention to these problems. As the arbiters are not protected they cannot act according to the rules. They act according to the wish of one of the players. If one of the players is more noisy or more famous the arbiter will serve him.'

No Regrets

– *Don't you think you sometimes exaggerate your suspicions. Like yesterday, when you finished your game and I asked if you had seen Kasparov's position. You said: 'I don't need to watch because the result of that game has been known from the very first move.' Do you regret that you said this?*

'No, I don't regret this. I think they were waiting. If I would not have cases against Kasparov, clear cases when he got points, I would not say this.'

– *Nothing happened yesterday. The game was drawn.*

'Because it was a hopeless situation. I made a draw. If I had lost to Anand it probably would have been another result. If the game had ended in a draw before my game I would have had no suspicions. As it happened after my game I still have suspicions. It's better not to have such situations with seconds playing in the same tournament. Even if nothing happens it is very unpleasant psychologically. There is always this possibility. You know which people are absolutely correct and never make special result. Most of the top players are like this. But still it's better not to have these situations.'

– *It's a difficult subject. In Dortmund both you and Epishin have been invited. In the eyes of others this also may look like asking for trouble.*

'No, in most cases, like when I played with Furman, I mostly made draws. We never played one game. We made only draws. Normally I make draws with my trainers. Only against Balashov I always played. We agreed on this beforehand. We always played but we would not play variations on which we had worked together. If you look at our games when we were working together you will always see some variation out of some world championship program or other. Because this was our agreement.'

No FIDE apologist

– *You briefly mentioned that in case of a good offer you might consider a match against Kasparov. Would this be a good solution to the split in the chess world?*

'It is not possible to have a final solution. Because Kasparov wants to destroy FIDE and wants the PCA to be the only organization. I am not a big apologist of FIDE, but still we need an international organization and the PCA cannot replace FIDE. The PCA is only for a few grandmasters. Not for all players in the world. Kasparov will never make a programme for children, for women. He will never organize zonal tournaments or team competitions. They aim for just a very narrow area of chess activity in the world. They pretend to be the main organization and want to kill the others. But they have no programme for this.

'The approach of the press is also very strange. That the PCA can replace FIDE. Never. Maybe FIDE' s structure could be changed into another organization. But it still would be an international organization like FIDE.

'If we didn't have the experience of the GMA I might be more optimistic about the PCA. I know too many stories of the GMA. How it was acting and what happened with the organization. I have big doubts about the PCA. Why they exist and whom they would serve (with a meaningful smile).'

– *You're thinking of one particular somebody?*

'Yes. No, maybe now there are two (laughs). I think the PCA started to make big problems and we should not stay silent about this. They organized their events to clash with traditional tournaments. This means they don't want to coexist peacefully. They want to fight. This is very bad. Now they have got this money from Intel for a rapid chess circuit and, I don't know, maybe for a world championship match. But with this money they want to kill traditional tournaments. Perhaps next year Intel says: 'OK it was a nice experience but now we are no longer interested in chess.' And we will be without Intel and without traditional organizers.'

– *Are you intending to use your prestige as a leading player to fight this?*

'I think that it is absolutely urgent and necessary to have negotiations to clarify the position of the PCA. If they intend to continue like this or not. Most important is that every grandmaster understands what he wants. What he wants and what is the danger. If most grandmasters don't feel any danger they may play PCA tournaments and traditional tournaments, but next year their calendar may be empty. For the average grandmaster conditions are getting worse. It's not easy to be number forty, never mind number eighty or ninety.

'In the PCA this gap between top chess players and middle level chess players will only widen. They have some good prizes in these rapid tournaments, but if everybody plays, most of them will spend more on their expenses than what they get back in prizes. Their situation will only get worse. You need some brains to see through the present situation and to understand what the consequences will be. Unfortunately grandmasters don't have time to use their brains to understand real life. Only when they start to get less money do they feel that something has happened (laughs).'

– *It's funny that you too have a rather low opinion of your colleagues' understanding of these matters. Kasparov told me yesterday that 99 per cent of the chess players did not understand what was going on in the chess world.*

'Unfortunately that is true.'

– *So finally we have found a point on which the two of you agree.*

(Laughs consentingly, but carefully avoids to give an affirmative answer.)

In 1995, chess reached the top of the world. Kasparov and Anand fought out a thrilling world championship match, held in a soundproof booth on the 107th floor of the World Trade Centre in New York (who could have dreamt of what would become of that iconic building, just six years later?). A solid start saw Anand take the lead after game eight, but then Kasparov went into overdrive.

Kasparov takes a healthy bite out of the Big Apple

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Garry Kasparov arrived, took a closer look and stayed on top of the world in the Intel World Championship Match. Two weeks of subdued tension and a string of draws seemed to erupt in a sensational upset when challenger Viswanathan Anand took the lead with a forceful win in Game 9. Few of the fortunate chess fans on the 107th floor of the World Trade Center could have predicted then that the reigning champion would only spill half a point in the next five games. With a stunning theoretical novelty in Game 10, the baffling introduction of the Dragon into his opening repertoire in Games 11 and 13, and a gripping bout of streetfighting in Game 14, Kasparov hoped to compensate a worldwide audience for the absence of drama in a good part of the other games. 'Do not be misled by the draws', he repeatedly stated, 'Nor by Anand's sudden collapse. This was a very tough match.' A tense struggle which the extremely well-prepared Indian lost on the psychological battlefield. As Kasparov put it, once the score had stopped at 10½-7½: 'Anand lacked chess stamina, which is difficult to translate into normal language. He was probably too optimistic before the match.'

The big question that remains is whether the huge media attention and wide press coverage will be translated into a real breakthrough in the United States. While some think him too optimistic, Garry Kasparov is confident that chess has arrived in the U.S.: 'Whatever our critics may say, we have accomplished more than anyone thought possible.'

The final press conference at 11 a.m. on the day following the last game, very much looked and felt like the final press conference. Bustling workmen had already reconverted the auditorium, and everywhere people were carrying chairs or hammering away for obscure reasons. The expressions on the faces of the participants in the press conference suggested that they had better things to do, while the press was still adjusting to the early hour. Still, I looked around in slight disbelief when Mike Couzens, Intel European Marketing Director, started his summing-up of the match with the words, 'The match started with eight draws, very exciting, and..' Instead of a roar of laughter, I only noticed a curled mouth corner here and a snigger there. Most people just sat there having become immune to words after another overkill of self-congratulatory speeches.

Each speaker had felt the need to stress that everyone had done a great job, some even a terrific job, and that many had been instrumental in making all this happen. Most of it undoubtedly true, but too much is too much.

Obviously Mr Couzens was not cracking a joke, which is maybe why later, when I thought back to these eight draws, a record in world championship chess, I wondered, 'But weren't they very exciting?' I think they were, but in a different manner and for a different reason. Even if these games did not come to full explosion on the board they told a fascinating story of behind-the-scenes strategy, frantic opening research, and nerves that were tested to the limit by the prolonged absence of a decision.

And didn't they take on a different and richer meaning when the match finally took off and the spectators got their 15 dollars' worth of chess excitement on the spot? When these draws became part of an overall, wider picture? Who knows, perhaps we did see a new type of world championship match, in which, as Kasparov emphasized, opening preparation has taken on yet a more pivotal meaning.

It will be intriguing to analyse this match ten years from now. When we will know its true impact. When we will know if this match began the exploration of new directions or whether it was just an incident with its own idiosyncrasies. When we will know if Anand was getting used to a match of this length, or if this was his one and only go at the crown. When we will know if it really broke ground in the United States or if it was just a flash in the pan.

Of course, the high number of short draws were a matter of immediate concern. Particularly the fightless draws when the match had effectively been decided caused irritation among the spectators and the press. At the press conference immediately after the 18th non-game, Anand demonstrated that he had not lost his sense of humour, when he expressed the hope that everyone 'had a lot of fun watching the event, especially today's nail-biting finish.'

The PCA must be praised for the rapid action that they undertook. Stung by the criticism levelled at him, Garry Kasparov suggested a new prize-money system for their next world championship match, which was accepted on the PCA Board meeting immediately after the match. One million dollar will be divided in a winner's (two thirds) and a loser's share (one third). Another half million will be split in twenty times 25,000 dollars, a bonus for each game. The player that wins a game gets 25,000 dollars. However, if a game is drawn, the money is added to the bonus for the next game, etc. All 20 games will be played irrespective of the score. In this system Anand would have made 225,000 dollars with his win in Game 9. Arithmetical talents will have figured out that it is theoretically possible for the loser of the match to earn more than the winner.

There is a good chance that this novelty will leave the match in New York with a unique, yet dubious record. Only one out of 18 games lasted well over four hours. The sea snake of the match was Game 17, which went on for four hours and 53 minutes.

Breathtaking

Another source of criticism were the conditions for both the spectators and the players. As to the first, it must be said that, leaving aside a few technical problems on the first day, the only point of criticism I could think of was the silly and utterly confusing 3D representation of the game on one of the monitors. Most regrettably this was the only monitor showing the actual position on the board. For the rest the Observation Deck was the most spectacular and wonderful venue I have ever seen. Against the backdrop of one of the most breathtaking views imaginable, an expert team of commentators provided the audience with all the information and entertainment they could have wished for. This time PCA regulars Maurice Ashley and Danny King were assisted by American grandmasters Joel Benjamin, Nick de Firmian, John Fedorowicz, Ilya Gurevich and Yasser Seirawan, who also took turns commenting on the games in the VIP-room. One of the nicest ideas was to have these grandmasters analyse the game in progress at three randomly placed tables amid the strolling tourists and chess fans, creating another welcome possibility for audience participation.

Sound-proof

Conditions for the players in their private sound-proof booth were less supreme, even if

intel
V. Anand
India
intel
CHESS
G. Kasparov
Russia

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

On top of the world: on September 11 (!) 1995. To the amusement of Anand and Kasparov, New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani makes the wrong first move.

their complaints were only vented after a couple of weeks. Perhaps Anand and Kasparov first needed the cries of disappointment at the end of week 2 or the shouts of excitement in week 3 to realize that their fish bowl was far from soundproof. PCA Commissioner Bob Rice asked for their understanding. This solution was part of the PCA's aim to present chess as a spectator sport at attractive venues. He particularly apologized to Anand, who had clearly suffered most. And for whom it was not the first time that the surroundings at a PCA event interfered with his play, even if he was less troubled at his Candidates' match in the shopping area in Trump Tower.

Prize-money

Anand was probably more upset by the reduction of the prize-fund by ten per cent, which in the end left Kasparov with 900,000 dollars and himself with 450,000 dollars. Here, too, Mr. Rice explained that the reasons behind this reduction were ultimately for the benefit of chess: 'The reason for taxing the prize-money was a very good reason that we were very happy about. The television production costs skyrocketed. We had so much demand for television pictures and it's an extremely expensive thing to produce TV. And to send them all around the world.'

The often repeated complaint that the overall prize-money could hardly be called impressive was countered by Kasparov: 'You can not only make calculations based on the world championship match. That was the rotten system presented by FIDE in the mid-eighties. When the match was the only well-paid event. For two players. The prize-money for that match represented perhaps ninety percent of the money in chess. Today you see a redistribution of the prize-money. Look at the speed chess circuit. For two years it's been pouring 1.5 million dollars into chess. To my mind a correct redistribution. I think we are going in the right direction.'

On the waterfront

As for their accommodation, both players had little to complain about, except perhaps for the fact that they had to pay for it themselves. Anand occupied a suite in the Vista, the hotel adjoining the World Trade Center. Despite living so close to the playing hall, his peace and quiet were ensured. Immediately on his arrival he helped a delegation member disconnect all telephones in his rooms. Kasparov had found the ideal headquarters at a ten-minute walk from the World Trade Center. In the superbly quiet and peaceful residential area of Battery City he had hired three spacious apartments for himself and his team. A considerable investment that he will have congratulated himself on every time he walked along the idyllic waterfront and gazed across the Hudson at the Statue of Liberty, or opened the curtains of his bedroom in the morning to look at the imposing Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

The players had taken no risks with their seconds either. Anand had again hired Artur Yusupov and Elizbar Ubilava, plus the additional services of Jonathan Speelman and Patrick Wolff. Kasparov relied on Yury Dokhoian, Evgeny Pigusov, Alexander Shakarov, and mystery guest Vladimir Kramnik!

Confidence

A good part of the vague feelings of discontent that the match left behind were linked to the notion that Anand might have pushed harder to fight for his chances. Or that he played below his usual level because of his timid opening choice. The contestants disagreed on several issues, but in this respect their views hardly differed. As the winner is always right, it may be appropriate to quote Kasparov in the press conference immediately after he had secured the title. There he said: 'No, I played a very tough match. It is easy to say that he didn't play well, but I am confident that with this thorough preparation he would have posed immense problems to any other player.'

Neither did he want to see this match as a testimony that the difference in strength was simply too big: 'Anand lost the match in five games. I lost four games in a row against Karpov the first time. It's also a lack of experience. He has not had such a tough opponent for such a long match. It's more about psychology and staying strength rather than his chess strength.' Perhaps the champion himself was not quite sure whether this match had been a wipe-out or whether it had been as difficult as he kept stressing all the time. When he was asked if he ever felt seriously threatened that he might lose the match he quipped: 'Yes. Before the match.' But once the laughter had died down he continued: 'I didn't play a proper world championship match for seven years. '87 in Seville, that was a really tough match. In 1990 I was confident that I was going to win. Before this match I felt that it was going to be very, very difficult. I was not very confident in the first week.'

The Dragon

When taking stock, a few words should be said about the harvest of opening ideas that the match brought us. On both sides the opening preparation was staggeringly deep and specialized, yet the match is unlikely to trigger many new trends. Anand's stealthy approach against the Scheveningen can hardly be called a failure, yet his handling of these set-ups is too hard to emulate to expect a new trend. Kasparov's gold-rimmed novelty in Game 10 will give the adherents of the Open Ruy Lopez a headache, but doubtlessly they will find ways to discourage White's attacking zeal. The one opening that will profit from this match must be the Dragon, whose number of followers had significantly dwindled over the past few years. It would have been worth a couple of dollars to see the twinkles in the eyes of faithful followers like Sergey Tiviakov and Kiril Georgiev when they received the games from New York. A reflection of their passion could be seen in the eyes of the newly converted Garry Kasparov, who did not tire of explaining why this opening had changed the course of the match. When the players were asked how much time they had devoted to the Dragon, Kasparov eagerly embarked on the explanation that you will find elsewhere in this issue. Anand was brief in his answer: 'Not enough.'

Professional chess

So the only question that remains to be answered is what the effect of this match will have on chess in the United States, professional chess in general, and the future of the PCA and FIDE. A complex package of questions that may have to wait for its answers for quite a while. In his speech at the prize-giving Kasparov once again stressed the extra significance that he attributes to this new successful defence of his title: 'Ten years ago, when I won the world championship title for the first time, I thought that I would never be so happy and so pleased again. I won a few matches since then but now I am really, really happy. (...) This is not an ordinary victory, another one. It will have very special memories. It crowns the first professionally organized world chess cycle. The first cycle financed by a private corporation, by public money. And this money comes from Intel. We can now say that the era for professional chess has started.'

Much may depend on FIDE's willingness to ratify the PCA-FIDE agreement that will be discussed at the forthcoming Extraordinary

General Assembly in Paris. Kasparov expressed his hopes that their decision will be positive. If not, the PCA will go their own way and continue to organize their own cycle. The mega-trump that they hold in these difficult days is the knowledge that soon they will sign a new, two-year contract with Intel.

Much will also depend on Anatoly Karpov and Gata Kamsky, who so far have refused to add their signatures to the part of the agreement that deals with the rules for the world championship. From the letters they have sent to Linares organizer Rentero it is clear that Karpov and Kamsky do not share Kasparov's ideals and visions. We will see. It may not be so easy to hammer out the exact terms, but the chess world will certainly be better off with a reunification.

Concerning Kasparov's hopes to further promote chess in the United States, let's hope for the best. All in all this world championship match was a splendid event at a wonderful venue. The procedure surrounding the move from Cologne to New York was certainly an unfortunate one, which may have done considerable damage in Germany, but given this decision, one can only come to a positive assessment of what happened in New York. Whatever nitpickers may say, bringing the match to the World Trade Center, having it opened by New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and getting the match on CNN, on the front page of the *New York Times* and in the sports section of *USA Today*, is something to be proud of. The many people who worked on this match did a great job, everyone who was instrumental in pulling it off did a tremendous job. It was a terrific... Oops. I hope it's not contagious. Which reminds me of what I wanted to say in the beginning. One thing that many people are not very fond of is hearing others shower themselves with praise all the time. Or are these also realities in a commercial environment? Perhaps, having encountered quite a lot of just and unjust criticism, some PCA people feel starved for praise and recognition in a wider circle and have therefore started to provide the praise and recognition themselves. Whatever, don't do that. It's not necessary. Especially if you are doing a great job and can look back on a tremendous... Sorry.

NOTES BY

Garry Kasparov

RL 27.5
Garry Kasparov
Viswanathan Anand
New York 1995 (m-10)

Game 10 was played under difficult circumstances for me. It looked as if the match was going in the wrong direction. In fact, it was not that simple. As I already described in the interview after the match, I had already found certain holes in Vishy's strategy and I knew already after Game 8 that Game 10 might be a very important, maybe even a decisive turning of the tables. Probably the idea that I found for Game 10 deeply affected the quality of my play in Game 9, because I wanted so badly to play White that day. I found the idea for this game on Friday night after the finish of Game 8, and I deeply analysed it during the weekend. Playing four different openings in Games 2, 4, 6, and 8, I wanted to find out where was the best possible strike for me. Where I could really hit him. Without any doubts I had decided that Game 6 had given me the best opportunity. The position that had arisen in the Open Ruy Lopez gave so many opportunities for White. Yet, I realized, obviously, that Vishy was very well prepared for any White continuation in the Open Ruy Lopez – as was proven by the fact that he made a new move in Game 6 (14...0-0-0), which nipped any White initiative in the bud. Still, I was not very convinced, and felt that White had many opportunities and routes to exploit. This was the way I found.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♘xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♗b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♗e6

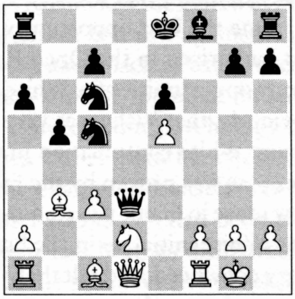
Before I went to the game I told my mother, 'If there is an Open Ruy Lopez, he is dead.' I found it hard to hold my breath when I saw the Ruy Lopez again and played very quickly: **9.♘bd2** To which he also answered quickly: **9...♘c5 10.c3 d4 11.♘g5**

This leads to probably the most complicated line of the Open Ruy Lopez. It was an invention of Zaitsev that first appeared in Game 10 of Karpov-Kortchnoi, in Baguio in 1978. Then it came as a kind of bombshell, but it did not quite succeed. Kortchnoi found a very interesting defence, which was definitely overlooked in his opponent's home analysis. Kortchnoi's idea prevented White from having too many tactical opportunities and developing a strong initiative. In fact, Vishy also decided to follow Kortchnoi's route in Game 6. And now again.

11...dxc3

Black has some other options. One is to take 11...♕xg5 and, after 12.♕f3, to go for a very complicated endgame. For example: 12...0-0-0 13.♗xe6+ fxe6 14.♕xc6 ♕xe5 15.b4 ♕d5 16.♕xd5 exd5 17.bxc5 dxc3 18.♘b3, and this position, which first arose in a Euro cup game Timman-Smyslov, Bad Lauterberg 1979, is very difficult to assess. I do not think that all of White's possibilities have been shown in this endgame. Another interesting alternative is 11...♗d5, which was successfully used by Ivan Sokolov against Vishy Anand. Black's position after 11...♗d5 has some holes and clearly White's game could be improved. But again, I felt strongly that Vishy would concentrate on the same line as in Game 6.

12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.bxc3 ♕d3

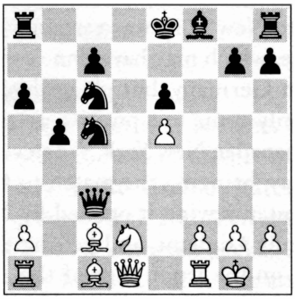


The point of Kortchnoi's defence. White has some difficulties continuing his development. It looks as if he should agree on a queen swap, which gives Black good hopes to develop his pieces, instead of suffering from the weaknesses in his position. In fact, after 14.♘f3 ♕xd1 15.♗xd1 White is better and my analysis before the match proved that he has a few opportunities to increase this advantage. But the very strong 14...0-0-0!, which I had looked at only superficially, in my opinion changed the character of the position. After 15.♕e1 ♘xb3 16.axb3 ♔b7 Black not only solved his problems but also had some really dangerous counterplay in Game 6, based on the fact that White's pieces are really pushed to the bottom rank. After the further 17.♗e3 ♗e7 18.♗g5, the very strong 18...h6! prevented White from bringing his knight to the very vital square e4, from where it could have jumped into Black's position via c5. After the continuation 19.♗xe7 ♘xe7 20.♘d4 the excellent positional exchange sacrifice 20...♖xd4 21.cxd4 ♕xb3 led to a position in which Black's chances were at least not worse. I do not know whether Vishy expected me to follow this path again or whether he had found some improvement in this line. My idea was absolutely different. I believed that, given the weaknesses of Black's position, all the holes on the light squares and the vulnerable position of the black king, there should be new opportunities for a White attack.

14.♗c2!

This move was in fact suggested by Tal immediately after the game in Baguio, but without a real continuation.

14...♕xc3



Black's position looks really solid, as moves like 15.♘e4 do not give White much hope. But there were some more sacrifices on offer.

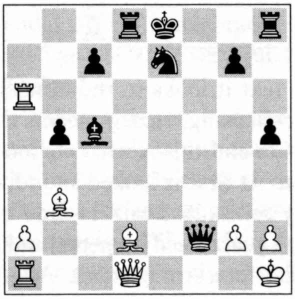
15.♘b3!!

In fact this move had already been played once in a correspondence game, as Ian Rogers pointed out at one of my press conferences afterwards. I did not know about that game and the idea just came to my mind on that Friday night after Game 8. Having found this move, we spent part of the night and the whole Saturday analysing this position. We were very surprised to find that the rook sacrifice is not only correct, but also puts Black in a very very dangerous situation, in which it is sometimes impossible to find a proper defence. After 15.♘b3 Vishy fell into a very long think. I understood perfectly well that it was not so easy to struggle with new problems of this kind.

15...♘xb3

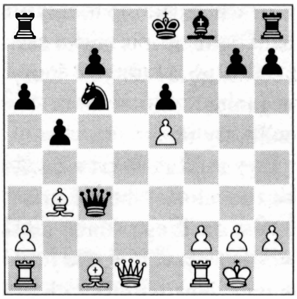
It is very hard to criticize this move, because White's entire idea to play without a rook for a few moves, can probably not be anticipated at the board by any player. Not taking the material could be a great disappointment after all, if you find out that White's idea was wrong. And I think that by this game Vishy had probably lost most of his respect for my opening preparation and for my ideas. He just was not very worried about the consequences. There is a variety of Black alternatives. For example, 15...♘b4 or 15...♗e7, but obviously the major alternative was 15...♖d8 16.♗d2, and now 16...♕xe5 would lead to this obscure correspondence game, when White could reach a very strong, if not decisive, initiative with 17.♖e1 ♕d5 18.♕g4, which was also pointed out by Ian Rogers at the same press conference. That was clearly not the way to play for Vishy, but instead of 16...♕xe5 he might have looked at 16...♖xd2, which leads to an unclear position with two pawns for the exchange for Black, against much better development for White. Yet, this might have saved him from a well-prepared sacrificial attack. Easy to recommend after the game, especially if during the game the dangers are not so obvious yet.

Editor's note: 15...♖d8 16.♗d2 ♕xe5 17.♖e1 ♕d5 18.♘xc5 ♗xc5 19.♗b3 ♕d4 20.♖xe6+ ♘e7 21.♔h1 ♕xf2 22.♖xa6 h5



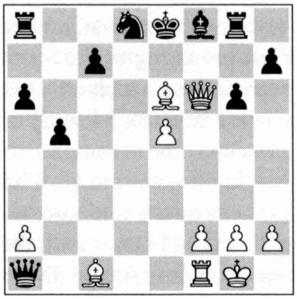
23.♗g5 ♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♗a7 25.♖e6 ♕c5 26.♗xe7 ♕xe7 27.♗d5 ♕xe6 28.♗xe6 ♔e7 29.♗f5 ♖f8 30.♖d7+ ♔e8 31.♖d5 c6 32.♗g6+ ♔e7 33.♖e5+ ♔d6 34.♖f5 ♖xf5 35.♗xf5 c5 36.♔g1, 0-1, Berg-Nevestveit, corr. 1990.

16.♗xb3



16...♘d4

The alternative was to take on a1, which leads to a straight line: 16...♕xa1 17.♕h5+ g6 (17...♔d7 loses by force after 18.♗xe6+ ♔xe6 19.♕g4+ ♔d5 – the dark squares are a minefield for the king because of the bishop check that wins the queen:. 20.♕f3+ ♔e6 21.♕xc6+ ♗d6 22.exd6 ♕e5 23.♗b2 ♕xd6 24.♖e1+ ♔f7 25.♕f3+ ♔g6 – 25...♕f6 26.♕d5+ ♔g6 27.♖e6 26.♕g4+ ♔f7 27.♗c3! and Black is out of business. This line was recommended by Fritz and I have to admit that the computer was widely used during this analysis. Whenever we had a straight line we switched on the machine. At the same time I must say that at the very beginning the computer was almost refusing to follow our lines, because it saw that White was playing without a rook. Only later it realized that the position was different and helped us enormously in the analysis) 18.♕f3 ♘d8 (after 18...♘d4 White has many possibilities, but 19.♕xa8+ ♔f7 20.♕d8! ♘e2+ 21.♔h1 ♕xe5 22.♗g5 gives White a very strong if not decisive attack) 19.♕f6 (you don't need the rook on a8, of course) 19...♖g8 20.♗xe6, and now we have two nice echo variations:



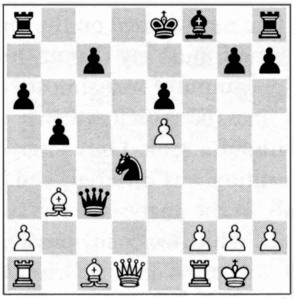
A) 20...♗e7 21.♗d7+! ♔xd7 22.e6+ ♘xe6 23.♕xa1, and White has a good and solid advantage. It's clear who is on top in this position, but Black can still fight, as it is not so easy to win.

B) On 20...♗g7 21.♗f7+! ♘xf7 22.♕e6+ decides the game.

A third possibility was:

C) 20...♖g7 21.♗a3 ♕xf1+ 22.♔xf1 c5 and now White can choose between 23.♗d5 and 23.♗xc5 ♗xc5 24.♕xg7 ♘xe6 25.♕xh7 ♖d8 26.♕xg6+ ♔e7 27.♕f6+ ♔d7 28.♕f3, and White has excellent winning chances, as the four passed pawns should decide the outcome of the game.

The text looks very natural. Black attacks the most dangerous White piece, the bishop on b3, and protects the pawn on e6. It looks as if White has few hopes to develop a further initiative. The obvious line 17.♗g5 is nicely refuted: 17...♘xb3 18.axb3 ♕xe5 19.♕h5+ g6 20.♕f3 ♗d6!, a counter-attack on h2 that protects both rooks on a8 and h8. I believe that most of the time Anand spent looking at this position and not believing that White could create something. What could White's reply to 16...♘d4 be? Here it comes.



17.♕g4!!

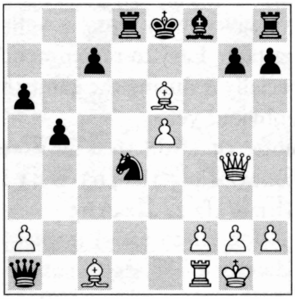
The beauty of this move, which no computer could even start to consider yet, or ever, only gradually sinks in. This move is not winning anything, it is not creating a threat, is not doing anything. It is just preparing White for the decisive attack, the strength of which only becomes apparent somewhat later. As I already described it took me quite some time to convince the machine that this was the direction to go. I had to push the button, otherwise the computer would never look in that direction. In any case it did not leave Black with much choice. Anand did not hesitate:

17...♕xa1 18.♗xe6

In fact a very quiet move. Not, of course, 18.♗e3 ♘e2+ 19.♕xe2 ♕xe5, and with Black's queen back in business White is lost. Now, what I know from this position from analysing it and going over it with my coaches and with the computer, I can say that Black is defenceless. I also believe that Anand's team went through the same procedure – more painful, of course, than it was for us - and reached at the same result.

18...♖d8

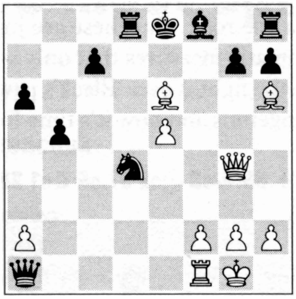
The most natural move, and one which Anand played quite quickly. There are a few other options that we can look at. 18...♕c3 also looks quite natural. Without going into too much detail, I want to give chess lovers an opportunity to find what White can do. The key is not to give the check on h5, as in these lines the pawn should be on g7. The main line starts 19.♗d7+ ♔f7 (19...♔d8 20.♗g5+ ♗e7 21.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 22.♕xg7+ shows why the pawn should be on g7) 20.♗e3 and the rest is up to you to find yourself. Black could also try 18...♗e7 or 18...♗c5. After 18...♗e7, White has a few options, but the attractive one is 19.♗d7+ ♔f7 20.♗g5 ♕c3 21. e6+ ♔f8 22.♕h5 g6 23.♕h6+ ♔g8 24.♗xe7 ♘f5 25.♕f4, and White has a decisive attack with his nice pair of bishops.



After the text it looks to the human eye that White is collapsing. 19.♗g5 seems the natural continuation and this is what we looked at for some time. At first it looked sound. After 19. ♗g5 ♕c3 20.♗xd8 ♔xd8 21.♖d1 c5 22.♗c8 White has a guaranteed perpetual and the possibility to play for a strong attack. After 22...♔c7 23.♕d7+ ♔b6 24.♕d8+ ♔c6 there are plenty of possibilities to develop this attack further. But instead of 20...♔d8, Black has a very unpleasant move, which pushes the queen from its ideal position on g4: 20...h5! And suddenly the whole of White's construction is destroyed and he is just losing a piece without any compensation.

However, the position after 18...♖d8 can be given to the machine and you can take my word that the machine will give you a very quick and convincing answer. This answer was played in Game 10 of the world championship match but I can tell you that I found it myself. Afterwards I was just surprised why we didn't try the machine in that situation. The same bishop should not go to g5 but make the longest bishop move in the position:

19.♗h6!(!)



A very nice move. The logical continuation of White's play but at the same time it creates a very nice position. The times used on the clocks after Anand's answer were highly symbolic: five minutes for White and one hour and twenty minutes for Black. Quite amazing, given the fact that I was playing against Anand, one of the fastest of today's top players. After the text it is clear that Black is doomed and it did not take Vishy much time to realize that the opening duel is over. Black is dead and he can make up his mind. Either to try and play for tricks, or go into a sad endgame with some practical chances. Vishy decided on the latter very quickly.

19...♕c3 20.♗xg7

White has many threats, but the point of White's attack is simply to give mate on f7, taking us back to a very early stage of chess, when f7 was the target for any manoeuvre when an amateur was playing White. It is funny that when you have gone from the very bottom to the top of the pyramid you find that apparently f7 is still the weakest square.

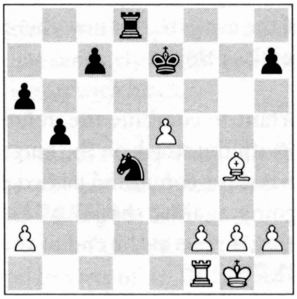
20...♕d3 Ironically this is the only move to prevent the black king from immediate execution. It also gives back the whole rook.

21.♗xh8 ♕g6

Obviously the computer would go for 21...♘e2+, winning an exchange, but after 22.♔h1 ♘g3+ 23.hxg3 ♕xf1+ 24.♔h2 Black is helpless. He cannot take on f2, 24...♕xf2, because after 25.♗f6 mate is inevitable. He will also be mated in a couple of moves after 24...♖d1 25.♕h5+ ♔d8 26.♗f6+. You may stop some of the threats by bringing the queen back, 24...♕d3, but then comes 25.♗f5 ♕c4 26.f4 and Black will not last long with his bad king against the crushing White pawns.

22.♗f6 ♗e7 23.♗xe7 ♕xg4 White wins much easier after 23...♔xe7 24.♕h4+ ♔e8 25.♗g4 with the queens still on.

24.♗xg4 ♔xe7



We have reached an endgame which at first sight looks completely winning for White. At a second look it gives some good practical chances for Black. I think that at this point Vishy was, well, not really satisfied obviously, but at least he saw a glimmer of hope. White's e-pawn cannot be advanced easily, the black king is well placed, the knight on d4 dominates the white bishop, and the black passed pawns may become extremely dangerous. If Black could push c5 and c4, he would be out of danger. The pawns could be very quick and at some point the number of pawns might be less important than their strength. However, White's opening strategy deserved better than a complicated endgame, and luckily White succeeds by playing very dynamically and energetically in what is still a sharp game.

25.♖c1!

A very important move in White's plan. Here I was out of my analysis and started spending my time. It was time to net the fish. Black's most dangerous pawn is stopped at c6, giving White some time to activate his king and to improve the quality of his passed pawns.

25...c6 26.f4 a5

Of course, Black should try any chance to create danger with his a and b-pawns as long as the knight on d4 is strong and the bishop on g4 is far away.

27.♔f2 a4 28.♔e3 b4

A nice trap. The natural move 29.♖c4 would run into 29...a3, when the knight cannot be taken (30.♖xd4 ♖xd4 31.♔xd4 b3) and due to Black's dangerous threats the position becomes unclear. Time to bring the forgotten bishop into play, stop Black's pawn and start dominating Black's knight.

29.♗d1 a3

On 29...b3 I simply play 30.axb3 axb3 31.♖b1, and the black b-pawn is worth nothing without the help of the c-pawn. But now there still seem to be some Black threats.

30.g4

It is important to combine the defence on the queenside with the attack on the kingside. After all White has three connected passed pawns and they are going against the king. That should create mating threats at the end of the day.

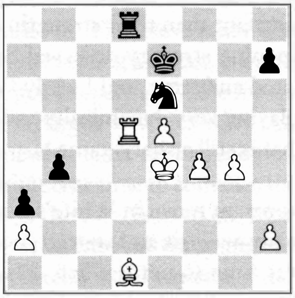
30...♖d5 31.♖c4

To answer 31...♘b5 by 32.♗b3, and the bishop is ideally placed to stop the black pawns and to support White's attack against the black king in combination with queening the pawns.

31...c5

There was an interesting chance to play 31...♘e6, containing an amusing trap: 32.♗b3 ♘c5, when the immediate 33.♖xb4? founders on 33...♖d3+ 34.♔e2 ♖xb3!. However, 33.♗c2 neutralizes the threat because after 33...b3 White simply plays 34.♗xb3.

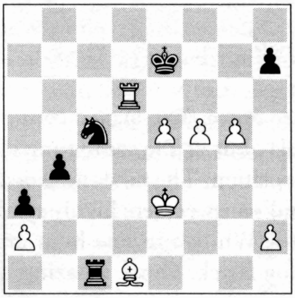
32.♔e4 ♖d8 33.♖xc5 ♘e6 34.♖d5



34...♖c8

Black could win an important pawn with 34...♖xd5 35.♔xd5 ♘xf4+, but after 36.♔c4 both queenside pawns will be lost and the lonely White a-pawn will carry the day. He could also have tried 34...♘c5+ 35.♖xc5 ♖xd1, hoping to exploit the threat of b3, as for example after 36.♖b5 ♖b1, but White has several ways of winning by combining the checks of the passed pawns. White can even win with 37.♖b7+ ♔d8 38.♖xh7 b3 39.axb3 a2 40.♖a7 a1♕ 41.♖xa1 ♖xa1 42.h4, and the four pawns should win easily against the rook. But these are just unnecessary dramatic measures that only stress once more that the fight is over. Black's pawns are no longer dangerous and now it's time for White's pawns.

35.f5 ♖c4+ 36.♔e3 ♘c5 37.g5 ♖c1 38.♖d6



Preparing the ultimate threat. It's not only the pawns queening, it's mate. Black resigned. After 38...b3 the most attractive possibility is 39.f6+ ♔f8 40.♗h5 ♖e1+ 41.♔f3 ♘b7 42.♖a6 and Black is in big big trouble. The game was over and I evened the match score. I proved the high quality of my homework and I also proved I had regained my confidence. A nice game that I will not be ashamed to show anywhere and which deserves to be included in any collection of my best games.

This was the turning point of the match. Because within 48 hours there would be big news for Vishy, even bigger than this novelty in the Open Ruy Lopez. A new opening in my life, the Dragon. The Dragon that would change the course of this match and kill Vishy's hopes to win the title this time.

Over the past quarter of a century, New In Chess has published many great games, and many great moves. Assessing quality in chess is always a rather subjective process, but if asked to nominate the singular most spectacular move ever seen in the magazine, I doubt that too many people would argue against Ivanchuk's 21st in the following game.

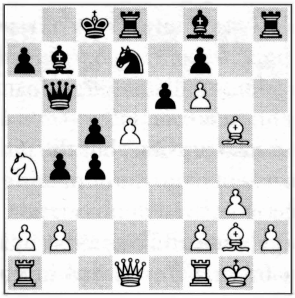
The most spectacular move ever?

NOTES BY

Vasily Ivanchuk

SL 7.8
Vasily Ivanchuk
Alexey Shirov
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5 10.♗xg5 ♘bd7 11.exf6 ♗b7 12.g3 c5 13.d5 ♕b6 14.♗g2 0-0-0 15.0-0 b4 16.♘a4



16...♕b5

In the Novgorod-94 super-tournament Shirov played 16...♕a6 against me, and after 17.a3 ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♘e5 19.♕e2 ♖xd5 20.axb4 cxb4 21.♘c3 ♕c6 22.♘xd5 ♕xd5 23.f3 ♗c5+ 24.♔g2 ♘d3 he gained quite sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange. But on this occasion he decided to try a different continuation.

17.a3 exd5

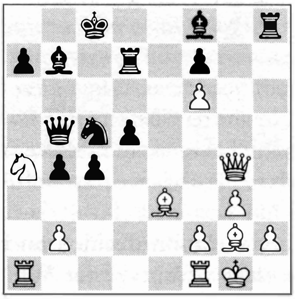
For a long time the main continuation in this position was considered to be 17...♘b8 18.axb4 cxb4, but the comparatively recently devised queen sacrifice 19.♕d4!? ♘c6 20.dxc6 ♖xd4 21.cxb7+ has seriously frightened the devotees of this variation with black.

18.axb4 cxb4

The most natural reply, although the sharper 18...d4!? has also already been tried.

19.♗e3 ♘c5 20.♕g4+ ♖d7

The latest word of theory. 20...♕d7 21.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 is bad in view of 22.♖fd1 ♘xf6 23.♗xa7, while to 20...♔b8 White has the extremely unpleasant reply 21.♕d4. Possibly attention should be paid to 20...♔c7!?, a move that, as far as I know, has not yet been tested in practice.



21.♕g7!!

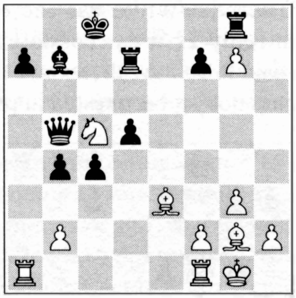
Here 21.♘xc5 ♗xc5 22.♗xc5 ♕xc5, with chances for both sides, used to be considered obligatory, but chess truly is an inexhaustible game!

21...♗xg7 22.fxg7 ♖g8 23.♘xc5

This was the position that I was aiming for when I sacrificed my queen. Black's defence is very difficult, since he must not only parry White's threats on the queenside, but also waste a tempo on eliminating the white g7 pawn.

GERARD DE GRAAF

A delighted Vasily Ivanchuk – perhaps about to explain 21.♕g7!! to the press corps?



23...d4?

The forcing variation decided on by Shirov leads to a clear advantage for White. It was probably better for the moment to pick up the g7 pawn and see what White does next. After 23...♖xg7:

A) 24.♗h3, when Black should play 24...f5! (of course, the passive 24...f6 is weaker in view of 25.♖xa7) 25.♗xf5 d4 (25...♖f7 is also possible, and if 26.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 27.♗d4, then 27...♖c7 28.♘xb7 ♖xb7) 26.♗xd4 ♖f7, retaining definite counterchances;

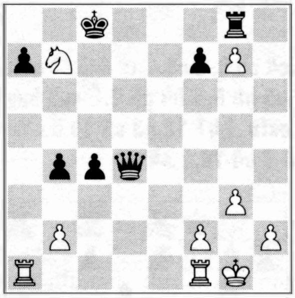
B) 24.♖xa7, when Black probably has nothing better than 24...♖c7 25.♘xb7 (25.♗h3+ ♔b8 26.♘xb7 ♖xb7 27.♖aa1 or 27.♖a2!? may be unpleasant for Black, but 25...♔d8 can also be considered) 25...♖xb7, but in the concluding position of this variation there is still all to play for.

Both 23...♖c7 and 23...♖e7 can also be considered. After 23...♖c7 I was intending during the game to take the bishop on b7, and, depending on which piece recaptured, decide how to develop my initiative, while as regards 23...♖e7, I find it hard to believe that it is stronger than 23...♖xg7.

24.♗xb7+ ♖xb7 25.♘xb7 ♕b6

Clever, but insufficient. However, Black already had no real choice, since 25...♔xb7 26.♗xd4 a5 looks unsatisfactory for him.

26.♗xd4 ♕xd4 27.♖fd1!



27.♘a5 was also possible, but the move played is stronger.

27...♕xb2

If 27...♕xg7, then 28.♖xa7 ♔b8 29.♖da1 ♖e8 (29...♕d4 or 29...♕e5 is bad in view of 30.♘a5!) 30.♘d6 ♖e1+ 31.♖xe1 ♔xa7 32.♘xc4 winning.

28.♘d6+ ♔b8 29.♖db1 ♕xg7

Black also loses after 29...♕c3 30.♖xa7!, or 29...♕d2 30.♘xc4 ♕c3 31.♖a4 b3 32.♘a5! b2 33.♖b4+. And 29...♕e5 30.♖xb4+ ♔c7 31.♖d1! is no better.

30.♖xb4+ ♔c7 31.♖a6 ♖b8 32.♖xa7+

The simplest. 32.♖xc4+ ♔d7 33.♘xf7 is less convincing on account of 33...♖b7!, while 32.♖b7+?? ♖xb7 33.♘e8+ ♔b8 34.♘xg7 c3 is totally bad.

32...♔xd6 33.♖xb8 ♕g4 34.♖d8+ ♔c6 35.♖a1

Black resigns.

Time for another article about a chess giant with the initials GK. But it's not who you think! Chess is about more than over the board play, and not all giants in the chess world are top-class players. In the world of endgame study composition, there are few names which stand higher than Genrikh Kasparian, composer of some of the most brilliant studies you will ever see. In New In Chess 1996/5, Arshak Petrosian marked the passing of his great countryman with a fine tribute.

In memory of a teacher

Arshak Petrosian

Genrikh Moiseevich Kasparian, the outstanding study composer and International Grandmaster for Chess Composition, has passed away. Another vivid page has been added to the history of world chess, and a life devoted wholly to the service of Caissa has come to an end.

To those who were fortunate to know him, he will be remembered as a modest, kind and sympathetic man, highly intelligent and, paradoxical though it may seem, taciturn and even rather enigmatic. Either these qualities helped him in the creation of miniature chess masterpieces, full of secrets and mysteries, or else, on the contrary, their creation demanded of him complete seclusion and secrecy. And although in his later years he shared the secrets of his work in his book 'Tayny Etyudista' (Secrets of a Study Composer), his studies continue to stagger the imagination with the depth of their latent ideas.

Genrikh Kasparian was born in Tiflis (Tbilisi) on 27 February 1910 into an Armenian family. It is known to only a few that until 1931 he had two first names. The point was that the priest who baptised the 4-year-old Genrikh did not like the boy's name, and he literally imposed another name – Rafael, which was entered onto the birth certificate. Of course, for his parents he remained Genrikh, but in official documents he was registered as Rafael. And it was only in 1931 that he was able to get back his original name.

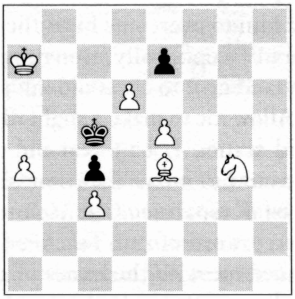
Kasparian came into chess thanks to his older brother, Ruben, who introduced it to Genrikh when the latter was 13 years old. At the time Ruben could hardly have imagined what a fateful role he had played in the life of his brother.

It wasn't easy for Genrikh to combine study at school, and then at the Tiflis Polytechnic, with participation in tournaments. But the young man's extraordinary industriousness and tenacity helped him to overcome his difficulties and to become an exceptionally strong player. However, his attachment to chess did not proceed at all easily. Allow me to make a slight digression.

The mid-sixties. I, a 13-year-old candidate master, was one of a few 'lucky ones', brought together by Kasparian. Open-mouthed, we heeded every word of our Teacher (It was he who supplied me with the basics of positional understanding, strategic thinking and endgame technique. Thanks to my fruitful lessons with Kasparian, in 1969 I managed to become one of the youngest masters in the USSR, and in 1970 the silver medal winner in the USSR Junior Championship), who generously shared with us his knowledge and experience, surely leading us forward through the mysteries of chess. And how could we, eagerly grasping his every word, have known that when he himself was 13 years old he keenly felt the lack of an instructor. It was only much later, in one of his articles, that Kasparian admitted: 'For the present generation of young players, the conditions under which juniors began learning the game in the 1920s will seem strange. Then there were no instructors... There were no chess schools, and no clubs where chess theory and practice could be studied. The meagre amount of chess literature available at that time could not fully replace the absence of instructors. The development of chess players proceeded largely on the basis of their own games.' Now, many years later, as a mature player, I realize how much he must have loved chess, how much he must have had to devote in terms of effort and striving for self-improvement, and how much he must have refined his God-given talent, in order to scale the heights and become a universally recognized name.

But let us return to the stages of Kasparian's chess biography. His love for chess composition began right from his first acquaintance with the game. At this early stage he composed a considerable number of problems, the majority of which, unfortunately, have been lost. The only ones remaining are those that were published in newspapers and magazines.

Here is one of them, that is simply a minor miracle!



Zarya Vostoka, 1927
Mate in 3 moves

1.♗a8! e6 1...ed6 2.♘f6 dxe5 3.♘e4 mate. **2.♔b7 ♔d5 3.♔b6**
Mate.

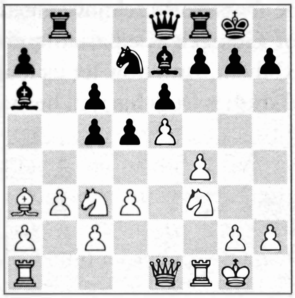
In 1929 Kasparian also achieved his first successes in practical play – he gained the First Category norm; which at that time was a considerable achievement. In 1931 he became Champion of Tiflis (he was to win the Championship of the Georgian Capital on two further occasions: in 1937 and 1945), and reached the Semi-Final of the USSR Championship, where he finished first, pushing the great Botvinnik into second place. For Kasparian 1931 also became an important landmark in chess composition – he switched completely from problems to studies.

In 1936 Kasparian moved to Yerevan, and from this point a new stage in his career began. At that time, early in 1936, the training of highly qualified players in Armenia was a sore point, and the strength of Armenian chess was at a very low level. Kasparian's arrival brought real hopes of a rapid development in the game. And already in May 1936 a match for the master title was held in Yerevan between master of sport Vitaly Chekhover and Kasparian, which ended in a convincing victory for the lower-ranked player with a score of +6 –4 =7. Kasparian became the first Armenian master!

The Second World War, in which Kasparian participated, cut short his chess activities until 1944. From 1945 his gradual return to active chess began. In his playing career he gained many major successes: ten times he was Champion of Armenia, three times Champion of Tbilisi, in 1935 he won the Transcaucasian Championship, on twelve occasions he appeared in USSR Championship Semi-Finals, and four times in the USSR Championship Final. In 1950 he was awarded the title of International Master. Kasparian was an extremely rare combination of an outstanding study composer and a strong over-the-board player. He not only possessed impeccable endgame technique, but also evenly and strongly conducted all the stages of the game. He succeeded in defeating many outstanding players.

SI 49.14
Genrikh Kasparian
David Bronstein
Leningrad Soviet Championship 1947

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.f4 e6 4.♘f3 d5 5.♗b5 ♘f6 6.e5 ♘d7 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.d3 0-0 10.♕e1 ♖b8 11.b3 ♕e8 12.♗a3 ♗a6

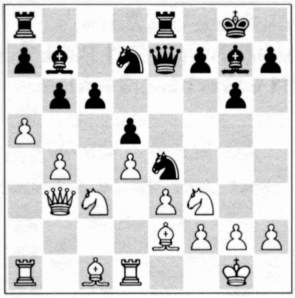


13.♘d1! f5 14.♕a5 ♗b7 15.♘b2 ♕d8 16.♕c3 ♗a6 17.♘a4 d4 18.♕d2 ♗b5 19.♘b2 ♘b6 20.♘c4 h6 21.♔h1 ♔h7 22.♖ae1 ♖b7 23.♖g1 ♘d5 24.♘d6 ♗xd6 25.exd6 ♕xd6 26.♖e5 ♖f6 27.♖ge1 ♖b6 28.♘xd4 ♖a6 29.♕c1 ♘b4 30.♘xe6 ♘xc2 31.♕xc2 ♖xa3 32.♕b2 ♖a5 33.♘xc5 ♗xd3 34.♘xd3

Black resigned.

SL 10.8
Viktor Kortchnoi
Genrikh Kasparian
Leningrad 1953

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.d4 c6 4.♘c3 d5 5.e3 ♗g7 6.♗e2 0-0 7.0-0 e6 8.b3 ♖e8 9.♕c2 ♘bd7 10.♖d1 b6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.b4 ♕e7 13.♕b3 ♗b7 14.a4 ♘e4 15.a5



15...c5! 16.a6 c4 17.♕b2 ♘xc3 18.axb7 ♘xe2+ 19.♕xe2 ♖ab8 20.♖xa7 ♘f8 21.b5 ♖xb7 22.♗a3 ♕d7 23.♖xb7 ♕xb7 24.♘d2 ♕d7 25.♗xf8 ♔xf8 26.♘b1 ♕xb5 27.♘c3 ♕a5 28.♕b2 ♖a8 29.♖b1 ♔g8 30.♕c2 ♗f8 31.g3 ♗b4 32.♘e2 ♗d6 33.♘c3 ♗b4 34.♘e2 ♗d2 35.♔g2 c3 36.♖b3 ♖c8 37.♘g1 ♕a4 38.♘f3 ♕xb3 39.♕xb3 c2 40.♘xd2 c1♕ 41.♘f3 ♕c6 42.♕b4 ♕e6 43.h4 ♖c2 44.♕b3 ♕e4 45.♕xb6 ♕xe3

And some 25 moves later White resigned.

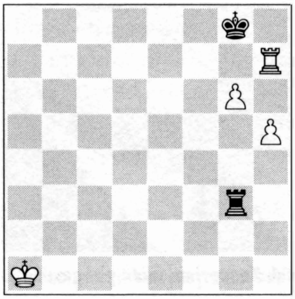
Genrikh Kasparian, widely regarded as the greatest endgame study composer of all time.

1956 was the year when Kasparian gave up over-the-board play. On the other hand, it was from this time that he was able to devote himself entirely to his main vocation – study composition.

His studies are of exceptional practical value, being highly natural. This is how Kasparian himself formulated the criteria for evaluating the quality of studies: 'The criteria for evaluating the quality of studies, in my opinion, should in the first instance be perfection of form in combination with a vivid idea and interesting play'. Deep, complex and at the same time unusual ideas, are built into his studies. The 'keys' to their solution are hidden so thoroughly, that reaching them can sometimes be very difficult.

I remember how on one occasion grandmaster Rafael Vaganian, the Grigorian brothers (both international masters), Eduard Mnatsakanian and I made a bet with Kasparian, that we would solve one of his studies very quickly. But after several hours of difficult and, alas, fruitless thinking, we had to admit defeat. A similar instance occurred with Alexander Koblenz and Viktor Goglidze (both Honoured Trainers of the USSR), when they were unable not only to solve a study, but even to guess its hidden idea: 'But this is a well-known 'drawback' to the studies of the Armenian master, the unofficial world champion among study composers', Koblenz complained jokingly.

Kasparian not only created studies, but was also the author of many profound analytical works, devoted to the opening and the middlegame. He also made a great contribution to the theory of the endgame: his famous studies with rook and two connected passed pawns against rook were so perfect, that they found their way into all books on the endgame. Here is just one of them:



Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1946
White to play and win

1.♔a2!!

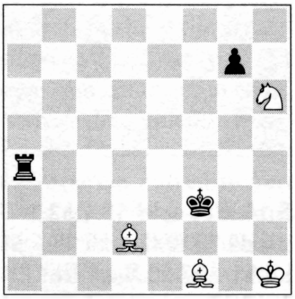
The only way. If 1.♔b2? ♖h3 2.♔c2 ♖g3 3.♔d2 ♖h3! 4.♔e2 ♖g3! 5.♔f2 ♖h3, with a draw, since it is now White to move. For example: 6.♔g2 ♖a3 7.♖b7 ♖a5, and 8.h6 is not possible on account of 8...♖g5+. White also gets nowhere with 1.♔b1 on account of 1...♖b3+!

1...♖h3 After another rook move with the aim of losing a tempo, 1...♖d3 for example, White wins by 2.♖b7 ♖h3 3.♖b5 ♔g7 4.♖g5.

2.♔b2 ♖g3 3.♔c2 ♖h3 4.♔d2 ♖g3 5.♔e2 ♖h3 6.♔f2 since it is Black to move. For example: 6...♖a3 7.♖b7 ♖a5 8.h6.

Altogether Kasparian composed more than 400 studies, and received 295 awards, including 80 first places. For his outstanding achievements in study composition, in 1956 he was awarded the title of USSR Honoured Master of Sport, and in 1972 the six-times USSR Champion for Study Composition and winner of many international competitions was awarded by FIDE the title of International Grandmaster for Study Composition.

Thus the chess world acknowledged the great services of Genrikh Kasparian and worthily recognized them. And now let us look at a few wonderful studies from his rich heritage.



64, 1933, 1st prize
White to play and win

1.♘f5 1.♘f5? ♔f2 2.♗h3 ♔g3 3.♗f1 ♔f2=.

1...g6! 1...♔f2 is weaker in view of 2.♗b5 ♖e4 3.♗a5 ♖e6 (3...♖e5 4.♗b6+) 4.♔h2 and White, having improved the placing of his pieces, must win.

2.♘e3 2.♘d6? ♖d4 3.♘c4 ♖h4+ 4.♔g1 ♖g4+=.

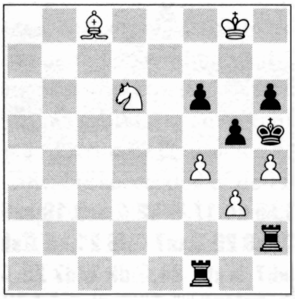
2...♖d4! 2...♔f2 3.♗c4 ♖a3 4.♘d1+ ♔f3 5.♘c3+−.

3.♗g2+! 3.♗c1? ♔f2 4.♔h2 ♖e4=.

3...♔f2! 3...♔e2 4.♗c1 ♖a4 5.♔h2 ♖a1 6.♗b2+−.

4.♘f1 ♖h4+ 5.♘h2 ♖d4! 5...♖a4 6.♘f3!+−, but after the move played this leads to a draw: 6.♘f3? ♖d3 7.♗e1+ ♔e2 8.♘e5 ♖d1=.

6.♗e1+! ♔e2! 7.♔g1! ♖d1 Black wins a piece, but... **8.♗f1+ ♔xe1 9.♘f3+** Mate.

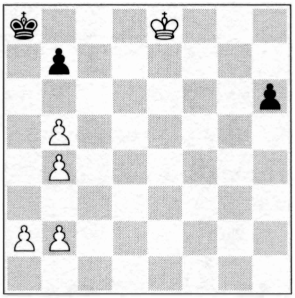


Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1935, 4th prize
White to play and win

1.♘e8 A false trail is offered by 1.♘f5? ♔g4! 2.♘e3+ ♔f3 3.♘xf1 ♖f2=.

1...♔g6 Defending against 2.♘g7+ ♔g6 3.♗f5+ mate, and 2.♗f5 ~ 3.♘g7 mate.

2.h5+! 2.f5+? ♖xf5 3.h5+ ♔xh5=. **2...♖xh5 3.f5+ ♖xf5 4.g4 ♖e5 5.♗f5+!** 5.♘g7 f5!. **5...♖xf5 6.♘g7!**+–



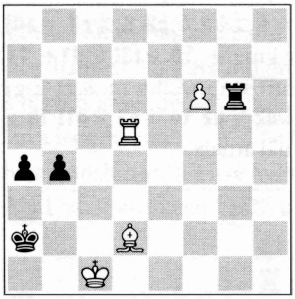
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1937
White to play and draw

1.♔d7! h5 2.♔c7! h4 3.♔b6 h3 4.♔a5

A) 4...h2 5.b6 h1♕ (White has to make three more pawn moves before he is stalemated, but Black cannot do anything) 6.b5! ♕b1 7.a4 and 8.b4 stalemate.

B) 4...b6+ 5.♔a4 h2 6.a3 h1♕ 7.b3 stalemate.

This is Kasparian's only pawn study.



Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1939, 1st prize
White to play and win

1.♗g5 1.♖f5 is bad in view of 1...♖g1+ 2.♔c2 b3+ 3.♔c3 b2 4.f7 ♖c1+ 5.♔d4 ♖c8

1...b3 2.♖d2+ ♔a1 3.f7 3.♗e3? b2+! 4.♖xb2 ♖xf6 5.♗d4 ♖f1+ 6.♔c2 a3! 7.♖b1+ ♔a2 8.♖xf1 – stalemate.

3...♖xg5! The best chance. 3...a3 fails to draw after 4.♖d1 ♖d6 5.f8♕ b2+ 6.♔c2+ ♖xd1 7.♕xa3+ mate.

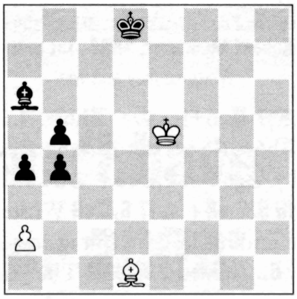
4.f8♕ ♖g1+ 5.♖d1 ♖g2

With the threats of 6...b2 mate and 6...♖c2 mate.

6.♕a3+ ♖a2 How is White to continue? If 7.♕c5, then not 7...b2+? on account of 8.♔d2+ b1♕+ 9.♔e1+–, but 7...♖h2 8.♖d2 ♖h1+ 9.♖d1 ♖h2 with a draw.

7.♖d2!! ♖xa3 7...b2+ is met by 8.♕xb2+ ♖xb2 9.♖xb2 a3 10.♖b1+! ♔a2 11.♖b8 ♔a1 12.♔c2 a2 13.♔b3 and wins.

8.♖b2! ♖a2 9.♖b1+ Mate.



Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1945
White to play and draw

1.♔d4!

Black was threatening to win by 1...b3. 1.♗c2? does not work in view of 1...♔c7 2.♔d4 ♔d6 3.♗d3 a3 4.♗c2 ♗c8 and 5...♗e6. And 1.♔d6? also fails to save White, after 1...b3 2.a3 b2 3.♗c2 b4.

1...b3

There is nothing else: 1...♗c8 2.♗c2 ♗e6 3.♔c5 – draw; 1...♔c7 2.♔c5 b3 3.a3! ♗c8 4.♔b4! ♗e6 5.♔c3 ♔d6 6.♗h5 ♗c4 7.♗e8 ♔d5 8.♔b2 ♔d4 9.♗d7 – draw.

2.♔c3!

Other moves lose: 2.axb3? a3 3.♔c3 b4+ 4.♔c2 ♗d3+ 5.♔c1 ♔c7 followed by ...♔d6-c5-d4-c3–+; 2.a3? b4! 3.axb4 b2 4.♗c2 a3 5.♗b1 ♗c8 6.♔c3 ♗e6 7.♗d3 ♔c7 8.♗b1 ♔d6 9.♗c2 ♔e5 10.♗b1 ♗d5 11.b5 ♔d6–+.

2...bxa2

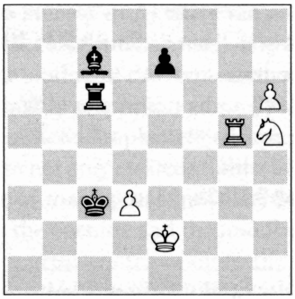
2...b4+ 3.♔b2 bxa2 (3...♗c4 4.a3! – draw) 4.♗xa4 ♗c4 5.♗d1 – draw.

3.♔b2 Intending 4.♗xa4.

3...a3+ 3...a1♕+ 4.♔xa1 a3 5.♗e2 intending 6.♗xb5=.

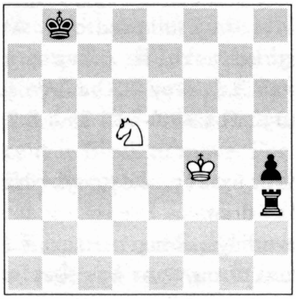
4.♔a1!! 4.♔xa2? b4 5.♗b3 ♔c7 6.♗g8 ♔b6 7.♔b3 ♔c5–+.

4...b4= Now Black's three extra pawns do not give him a win. The play can proceed 5.♗b3 ♔c7 6.♗a4 ♔d6 7.♗b3 ♔c5 8.♗a4 ♔d4 9.♗b3 ♔c3 10.♗a4 ♗f1 11.♗b3 ♗d3 12.♗a4! ♗c2 13.♗b3! draw.



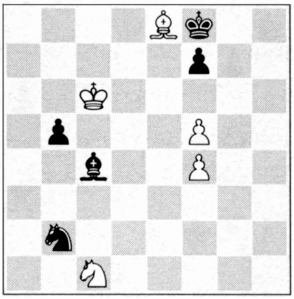
Kubbel Memorial, 1946, 1st prize
White to play and win

1.♘g7! 1.h7? ♖e6+! 2.♔~ ♖h6=. **1...♖xh6** 1...♗f4 2.h7 ♖h6 3.♖h5 ♖xh5 4.♘xh5 ♗e5 5.♔e3 △ 6.♘f4 and 7.♘g6+–. **2.♖c5+ ♔d4 3.♖c4+ ♔e5 4.♖xc7 ♔f6 5.♘e8+ ♔f7 6.♖c8** White has managed to defend his knight, but even so it is badly placed. **6...♖e6+! 7.♔d1!!** The point of this move becomes clear later. **7...♖g6!** Intending 8...♖g8. **8.♘c7!** 8.♖a8 does not achieve anything in view of 8...♖c6! 9.♔e2 ♖c2+ 10.♔e3 ♖c1 11.♔e4 ♖c2 12.♔d5 ♖c1 13.d4 ♖c2 14.♘d6+ exd6 15.♔xd6 ♖d2 16.d5 ♖d1, with a well-known theoretical draw. **8...♖c6! 9.♔d2!!** This is why White played 7.♔d1!! After the immediate 7.♔d2? ♖g6! 8.♘c7! ♖c6! he cannot win, since it is his turn to move, for example: 9.d4 ♖c4 10.d5 ♔g6 – draw. But after 7.♔d1!! it's Black who ends up in zugzwang. **9...♖c5** 9...e6 10.♘b5+–; 9...♔g6 10.♘d5+–. **10.♖f8+!+–** Kasparian considered this study to be one of his best compositions.



Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1947
White to play and draw

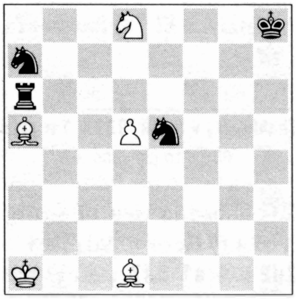
1.♘e3! 1.♔g4? loses to 1...♖d3! 2.♘f4 ♖d4, but after 1.♘e3 White is threatening 2.♘f5, with a draw. **1...♖h2! 2.♔g4 h3 3.♔g3 ♖b2! 4.♘g4** 4.♘f1? ♖b1 5.♘h2 ♖b3+–+. **4...♖b3+ 5.♔h2 ♔c7! 6.♘f2!** 6.♘e5? ♔d6! 7.♘f7+ ♔e6! 8.♘g5+ ♔f5 9.♘xh3 ♔g4 10.♘f2+ ♔f3 11.♘h3 ♖b2+ 12.♔~ ♔g3 and wins. **6...♖b2 7.♔g1 h2+ 8.♔h1 ♖xf2** Stalemate.



Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1949, 1st prize
White to play and draw

1.♗d7 b4 2.♔c5 b3 3.♔b4 ♘a4! 4.♘xb3 ♗xb3 Both black pieces are indirectly defended: 5.♔xb3? ♘c5+–+, or 5.♗xa4? ♗xa4 6.♔xa4 ♔e7–+.

5.♗c6!! It is essential for the bishop to occupy the long diagonal. **5...♗d1 6.f6!** Threatening to take the knight. **6...♘b6 7.♔c5 ♘a4+** Now the point of 5.♗c6!! becomes clear – the black knight is unable to go to a8 or hl, as is seen after White's 12th move. If 7...♘c8 White draws by 8.♗d7. **8.♔b4 ♘b2 9.♔c3 ♗a4!** Vacating d1 for the knight. **10.♗f3! ♘d1+ 11.♔d2 ♘f2 12.♔e3 ♘d1+** 12...♘h3 13.♗g4 ♘g1 14.♔f2 – draw. **13.♔d2 ♘b2 14.♔c3 ♗d1! 15.♗c6!** Draw by perpetual attack.



L'Italia Scacchistica, 1967, 1st prize
White to play and draw

1.♘b7 ♘c8 Vacating a7 for the rook. 1...♘b5 or 1...♘c4 is bad on account of 2.♗e2. **2.♗b3! ♖a7 3.♗a2!** 3.d6? ♘b6–+. **3...♖xb7 4.♗c3 ♖e7 5.d6! ♘xd6 6.♗b4 ♖d7** To 6...♘ef7(c4) White replies 7.♗xf7(c4) ♖a7+ 8.♗a2. **7.♗c3 ♖e7 8.♗b4** A positional draw.

Whatever one may think about the conduct of FIDE Presidents in recent years, nobody can deny that they are a colourful lot. When Campomanes stepped down, most of us thought life would become somewhat duller, but how wrong we were! His successor, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, hailed from a country most chessplayers had never even heard of. Fifteen years later, he has certainly put Kalmykia on the map. Following his re-election in 1996, he gave an extensive and remarkable interview to New In Chess.

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov: 'I have plans until the year 2000'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

At another tumultuous and confusing FIDE Congress in Yerevan, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov was re-elected as FIDE president. His re-election was not the mere formality that many had foreseen, however hard it would have been to find someone in the Armenian capital who did not sing the praises of the Kalmykian ruler and multi-millionaire. Ilyumzhinov followed the bickering with a stony face, handed out gifts and promised to make chess the most profitable sport in the world. The chess players await his actions in keen expectation. Kirsan himself has no doubts, as he readily explained in a lengthy interview. The Karpov-Kasparov match is in the making, as is the knock-out world championship with a five million dollar prize-fund. And this is just the beginning: 'Don't forget that I have only been FIDE president for eight months. I have plans until the year 2000.'

The spontaneous applause that welcomes him has a sound of relief and anticipation to it. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov walks straight to the table in front of the audience and looks frankly at the journalists he has invited. Without further ado he begins to speak: 'I want to meet you because I am a new man in chess. I am the president of FIDE and that's why I want to introduce myself. There are a lot of articles about me, but I wanted to meet with you eye to eye. I am 34 years old and I am Kalmyk. The Kalmyk people are the only Buddhist people living in Europe. The Kalmyk Republic is situated in the southern part of the Russian Federation, where the Volga river flows into the Caspian Sea. I am also president of the Kalmyk Republic. I was elected president of Kalmykia when I was 30 years old. Last October I was re-elected for another seven years. I am also a member of the Russian parliament. In the Russian parliament I deal with the foreign policy of the Russian Federation.'

Ilyumzhinov chooses his words calmly and they do not sound immodest. His English is certainly not flawless, but it is astonishingly good for a man who had very few words at his command in this language only a couple of months ago. He hardly moves. He emphasizes his words with a slight gesture of his hands or a smile from his eyes. Behind him two bodyguards keep a close watch. A blond Arnold Schwarzenegger clone and a dark man with the lazy gaze of Sylvester Stallone.

Ilyumzhinov loosely clasps his hands behind his back when he continues: 'You know that eight months ago I was elected president of FIDE. I was a chess player. Now I have no time to play chess. When I was a schoolboy of fourteen years old I was a champion of the Kalmyk Republic and in Moscow I was champion amongst the Moscow students. I wrote three books on chess and when I was elected president of the Kalmyk Republic the first official decree I signed concerned government support for chess in Kalmykia. Now one hundred per cent of the Kalmyk people play chess. At school children must study chess. Everybody who wants to be a minister or a member of parliament must play chess in Kalmykia.'

His words draw the inevitable response. His audience applaud enthusiastically, casting another expectant look at the big heap of plastic bags that Ilyumzhinov's aides have deposited in a corner of the room. Everyone knows that the president has visited virtually all 113 teams participating in the Olympiad and that he also received the arbiters earlier this day. At the end of these meetings the Kalmyk millionaire presented everyone with a bag full of gifts.

For the moment the journalists have to exercise patience. First Ilyumzhinov tells them about the Russian championships and the match between Karpov and Kamsky that he organized in his hometown Elista. And about the two million dollars he spends on chess every year. In 1998 the Chess Olympiad will be held in Elista, too. Nobody thinks this is possible, but Ilyumzhinov explains that by then two new hotels, an Olympic village and the first chess museum in the world will have been constructed.

As FIDE president he has already visited 42 countries, as it is his philosophy that many more people have to be attracted to chess. He says: 'Chess is not only Karpov and Kasparov', and again he is treated to a round of warm applause.

Then the great moment arrives and the journalists and other guests flock forward to shake hands with the president — or take no risk and go for the bags first. The contents are quite impressive. Apart from gadgets such as buttons, pins and calendars illuminated with the president's image, there is a splendid book on the Karpov-Kamsky match with an introduction in which Ilyumzhinov explains his chess plans up to 2000; a box with his photo on the lid, containing a bottle of Kirsan vodka and a small jar of Kirsan caviar; a gold-plated watch with the words 'FIDE' and 'Kirsan' on the watch face; and finally a number of autobiographical booklets, including the story of his life told and depicted in cartoons that causes a lot of hilarity. The total value of the gifts is difficult to assess, but it is clear that the watches were appreciated the most. At the FIDE Congress many delegates proudly wore them. In the playing hall several players sold their Kirsan watch, which did between sixty and eighty dollars.

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov had come to Yerevan to be re-elected, and in line with all expectations that was exactly what happened. The only surprise was that his re-election was not a smooth affair at all. Whoever took the floor in the General Assembly, including his adversaries, praised the sitting president to the skies. Nobody, really nobody raised his voice to question his policy. Neither were the problems he encountered connected with the fact that he was not an official candidate. Only two candidates had announced their candidacy and presented their teams in time: Jaime Sunye Neto and Bachar Kouatly. Ilyumzhinov did not feel the need to present a team. He wanted the General Assembly to judge his first eight months in office. If they were satisfied with his work so far they should vote for him. Once he was re-elected he would compose his team.

Not everyone endorsed this plan, for the simple reason that it was in direct conflict with the FIDE statutes. Still, it did not look as if the ambitious president would be stopped by these reservations. Even if the opposition against his arrogant attitude became serious, nothing would be lost for Ilyumzhinov. Kouatly's team, with Anatoly Karpov as candidate for vice-president, was entirely pro-Ilyumzhinov and had expressed their outspoken wish to keep Ilyumzhinov in power.

Which only left Sunye Neto's team, which had presented themselves as the representatives of a number of decent western countries who were fed up with the chaos in the world chess fed-

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, only 34 at the time, but already master of all he surveys in two kingdoms – Kalmykia and Caissa.

eration a couple of months back. A remarkable member of Sunye's team was Andrey Makarov, the pro-Kasparov president of the Russian Chess Federation. What should have been a valuable asset turned out to be a Trojan horse. In Yerevan, Makarov pulled the sting out of Sunye's team. Following a brief absence, he returned to the Armenian capital to announce that he left Sunye's team and that from now on he would give unconditional support to Ilyumzhinov.

Makarov's change of heart, probably caused by political pressure from Moscow, was a heavy blow to Sunye's chances. Makarov's switch also effectively put an end to the talks between Sunye's team and Ilyumzhinov about a compromise according to which Ilyumzhinov would remain president, but Sunye would become chairman with considerable power.

So it didn't go like this at all. First, in a tense atmosphere the General Assembly rejected a motion to elect only the president. Then a second motion was accepted with a two-thirds majority that said that seven-person teams like Sunye's and Kouatly's, conflicted with the statutes, which called for teams of five. The entire proceedings were quite absurd and nonsensical. Essentially what happened was that several days were dedicated to annulling the candidacy of the legitimate candidates and to clearing the way for a candidate who had made no attempt to follow the rules.

Still, a clear majority could live with the ultimate result, viz. an election with two five-member teams, one headed by Sunye and one led by Ilyumzhinov, after a third motion, asking again for the direct election of only the president, had also been rejected.

Finally Ilyumzhinov scored an easy victory with 87 against 46 votes, and as if the past days had been spent in perfect harmony, the delegates embraced and congratulated each other. Still, the winner did not emerge from the battle unscathed. The night before the decisive vote Kouatly caused quite a stir when he lodged two severe accusations in the General Assembly. The Frenchman had withdrawn his candidacy and still supported Ilyumzhinov, but he condemned the way the meeting had been conducted. His first accusation concerned the memorandum that Makarov had shown to the delegates, in which Karpov and Kasparov had laid down their intention to play a match outside FIDE. Kouatly claimed that Karpov's signature on the document was false. The next day Kouatly was proven wrong, but he caused an even bigger stir with his story about Ignatius Leong, who was the Singapore delegate and also Ilyumzhinov's chess secretary. According to Kouatly, Leong had offered Ilyumzhinov his resignation that afternoon as he no longer supported his line. On hearing this, Ilyumzhinov had flown into a temper and summoned Leong to hand in his Singapore vote and the three proxies he had. Then Leong was taken out of the building. No one knew where he was now. Most probably he had gone in hiding.

Ilyumzhinov patiently listened to the accusations, but once he started his answer he seemed to be gripped by emotion. Kouatly's words were all lies and he had not only insulted him, but also the Kalmyk people who had elected him with a huge majority. With a grim face he rose from his seat and adjourned the meeting till 9 a.m. the following day. In the ensuing commotion Sunye urged the delegates to keep their calm. At first he also invited them to continue their talks but there was no such chance. Immediately half the lights in the hall were turned off and the microphones went dead.

The following morning Leong turns up in the General Assembly, to everyone's relief. In the middle of the night, Herman Hamers, the president of the Dutch Chess Federation, had traced him and taken him to the American delegate Steve Doyle, where he spent the night. He was taken to the congress in a U.S. embassy car. After repeated urging by Florencio Campomanes, Leong agrees to come forward to tell his side of the story. He does not say much, but one point he wants to stress: in no manner whatsoever has he been physically threatened. Late last night he had accepted an invitation of the president to have another talk and had reacted positively to his request to withdraw his resignation. At the same time, the president had offered his apologies for his agitated behaviour. Now Leong wants to retract his promise to withdraw his resignation after all. He has had enough. One and a half months ago there had also been a death threat. He is going to do something else. Finally, Leong wishes his friend Kirsan all the best.

In the next break I find Leong in a corner of the hall, smoking nervously, with his eyes darting to and fro. I ask what he meant when he said that one and a half months ago he had had a death threat. He answers that he was highly surprised that no-one in the Assembly wanted to know. During a meeting in Moscow, Makarov had snapped at him that Karpov's candidacy as vice-president was an insult to the Russian Chess Federation. In the presence of some ten people he had added: 'I could kill you.'

Leong shies away from further questions. It is difficult to say whether he is confused by threats made at him, or that he is overworked and cannot think straight. In the days before the incident I heard several people speak positively about Leong and describe him as a hard-working and dedicated man. When a French friend asks him a few questions, he becomes more accessible. Does he dare to go back to Elista to go and fetch his belongings? Leong shakes his head in denial: 'Not because of Kirsan. I expect nothing bad from him. But I don't know how his people will react. No matter what, they will think I have insulted Kirsan.'

One day later the closing ceremony of the 32nd Chess Olympiad takes place in the Sport and Concert Complex, a giant concrete space ship sitting on a hill on the outskirts of Yerevan. Ilyumzhinov sits in the front row in the company of Kasparov, Makarov, Campomanes and the Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrosian. When the last song has died down I hurry to the FIDE president's office, deep down in the labyrinth of corridors. Ilyumzhinov's memory seems to be excellent, but nevertheless I worry whether he has not forgotten our appointment. Or whether he has the time to stick to it. Surrounded by dozens of delegates, all with their own question to ask, I had asked him for an interview at the end of the Assembly. Ilyumzhinov remembered an earlier encounter in which I had announced my wish to speak to him, and thought for a little while. After the closing ceremony was fine, he said, before he added a courteous 'Thank you' and lent his ear to the delegate next in line.

My worries prove unfounded. An employee of the Kalmyk consulate in Moscow notifies Ilyumzhinov's secretary, who returns within ten seconds with the request to follow him. In the corner of his improvised office Ilyumzhinov rises from behind a writing-desk, where he has been working underneath a light blue FIDE flag. Relaxed, as if the rest of the day belongs to us, he offers me a seat. He remains relaxed, even though his schedule is extremely busy till late that night. Three quarters of an hour I get, with an interruption when he has to meet a few other commitments. After half an hour his secretary warns us that the blitz tournament he has organized for the FIDE delegates is about to begin. At a gallop we head for the playing hall, where in his short speech the president repeats that he has offered a ten thousand dollar prize-fund for this special tournament, which has drawn some thirty participants. To my utter amazement, both Kouatly and Sunye Neto take part. The Frenchman takes the three thousand dollar first prize, the Brazilian has to settle for the two thousand dollar second prize.

Our next destination is the congress hall, where Ilyumzhinov is to give a press conference. In the absence of critical questions he uses the opportunity to tell a few interesting tidbits. He is negotiating with Karpov and Fischer to have their 1975 match played after all. His hopes are to organize the match in the Philippines with a five million dollar prize-fund, the same amount that Marcos was willing to spend at the time.

It also becomes clear that he does not limit himself to chess to draw Kalmykia from anonymity. Diego Maradona has accepted an invitation to come to Elista for a week, together with his wife and children. There they will be his personal guests. First they will go fishing and hunting. Later the president hopes to discuss with the Argentinean football star what he can contribute to Kalmykian football, either as a player or as a coach. But, as pointed out earlier, first we discussed chess in the president's office.

– *Did you expect that the elections would be this difficult? Many people foresaw an easy win for you?*

'I knew that they would be very difficult. Why? Because in Elista at the last Board Meeting we had decided to be one united team. But in Amsterdam some federations decided to go their own way. Bachar (Kouatly) created his ticket and then I understood that it would be a difficult fight. And when I came here (hesitates briefly before he starts laughing) I noticed that FIDE remains FIDE. There were a lot of games under the table.'

– *Did you have to get used to this or was it something you were familiar with from your political career in the Soviet Union?*

'You see, I have great experience. Four times I was elected as a member of the Russian parliament. First of the parliament of the Soviet Union, later of the parliament of the new Russia. Twice I was elected president of the Kalmyk Republic. I know the system and the structure, the laws of this fight. As a fight this was not difficult for me. I knew the ropes and knew that I would win. I only didn't know by what margin.'

'As a fight, this was not difficult for me. I knew the ropes and knew that I would win.'

– *You never lost confidence? Never had any doubts?*

'No, no.'

– *You speak about your familiarity with this kind of elections. On the evening of the last day I was convinced that you would try to gain time. That you would try to postpone the election till the following day. So that you had another night to convince yourself that you had sufficient support to win. Bachar Kouatly's attack handed you the opportunity to get angry and feel insulted and adjourn the meeting. Was it an orchestrated adjournment?*

'Yeah, the situation was very nervous. And all the information from Bachar Kouatly were lies. About Karpov's signature and so on. I knew that and decided to have a break so that during the night everyone could convince themselves that the signature was genuine and that the information Bachar had given about Leong was false. Therefore I decided on a break. It's a political method. To have a break and wait. Time will work for you and in the morning everything will be very clear.'

– *Still, you agreed that you lost your temper with Leong and that later you apologized.*

'Yes, because it hurt me very much. Leong had been living in Kalmykia for several months. He lived in my house. Like a brother. And I trusted him very much. Every day he was near me in hotel Armenia, from the morning till the evening when he wrote a report. Our relations were very, very close. When he turned against me I was very surprised and I invited him and asked him: 'What's the reason Leong? What's the reason?' And he apologized a lot, Kirsan I am sorry, but now I like Bachar.'

– In general your outer appearance is very quiet and impenetrable, so it was quite surprising to hear...

'Because during my political life I have gotten great experience with my friends. Sometimes they use you, sometimes they leave you. But I don't understand Leong, because he knows that I love chess. Not just because of this post of president. Leong knew my position. That evening he asked me all kinds of questions, we discussed all this, and then he told me that someone had misinformed him. That's why he had not understood my strategy.'

– When you appeared in the chess world you were heralded as the man who was going to bring together Karpov and Kasparov. It looks as if you are making progress, although there is still a lot to be solved. What do you think are the special qualities of both Karpov and Kasparov?

'As persons I like them both very much and I have very good relations with both of them. Sometimes it's difficult to talk with them, because you know their relationship. But I think that they can sit together and discuss matters. You know that last August on the 23rd I invited both of them. We talked and then we had lunch. We were sitting together very quietly. I think that for the future of chess this match between Karpov and Kasparov is a good thing. It is good that they are in dialogue. As long as Karpov and Kasparov fight each other, some people will support Karpov and some people will support Kasparov. Some journalists will be pro-Karpov and some will be pro-Kasparov. And the chess world will be divided. What we need is unity.'

– You might also say, we need to get rid of one of them, because we need one champion.

'Yes, of course.'

– There are many stories about how you gathered your wealth. A couple of years ago Kasparov explained to me in an interview that at that time Russia was a fascinating country to do business and to make money. He had never done anything against the law, but fortunately there were quite a few loopholes in that law. Should we see your wealth from this same perspective?

'You know that when I graduated from the Moscow International Institute in 1989, we still had the Soviet Union. I worked very hard, with the Japanese and others. But all this time I was also a politician. A member of parliament and people were watching me. It is very difficult to break the law if everybody is watching you. I would never have been elected President of Kalmykia or as a member of parliament. That's why your business should always be clean and straight. And open. Everyone knows how I earned and earn my money. Usually when I earn money I spend it on building churches and things like that. Ninety-five per cent of what I earn I usually give to the people. For the support of chess, for everything.'

– But still you must have profited from the situation in Russia to do such good business?

'Yes, the Soviet Union and Russia. But I have business in many countries. In Germany, in France. Four years ago I had businesses in France, in Japan, in the United States of America, in Korea..'

– What kind of business should I think of?

'Oil, trade, buying and selling, the production of consumer goods, textile. Many kinds of business. Hotels. In Vietnam I now built a hotel and a business centre in Saigon. Any business.'

– Should the presidency of FIDE also support your political career? Or your business career for that matter?

'No, no. I spend a lot of time on chess. If I did not spend this time on chess that would be better for me as a politician and a businessman. You see, during the two weeks that I was here (starts laughing contagiously while the pitch of his voice rises) there was no business, no politics. Just chess, chess, chess. Every day, all through the day, chess federations call me and explain their problems to me.'

– At the same time you announce all kinds of chess events in countries that you also do business with.

'Yes, because I have very close relations with businessmen in Korea. For example the honorary chairman of the Hyundai Group. They produce cars, ships and so on. Also in the United States I have a lot of friends among big businessmen. And I ask them to help chess. (Laughs in feigned desperation) But they don't know chess. They don't play chess. And every time I ask them to help chess. I am using my relations for chess. These businessmen, of course they cannot earn anything from chess, but they donate to chess because they know me.'

– *Don't they want something back for their money?*

'Not now, but maybe in several years when I will have raised the image of FIDE and of chess. Then. Now chess doesn't give back money. I have invested several millions of dollars in chess but I have not yet earned back anything.'

– *There have always been questions about your image. In the autobiographical comic book that you hand out there are several jokes on this subject. In your student days the KGB investigated suspicions of speculation, narcotics, abuse, pimping and even espionage on behalf of Afghanistan. OK, this is all very funny, but somebody else might say, where there's smoke there must be some fire. Why did they investigate this?*

'You see, I always was in a very prominent position. Excellent student, excellent worker, excellent businessman. Some people don't like this. I work very hard. What is the secret of my success in business and so on? That I never take holidays. After I graduated from the Moscow International Institute in 1989 I only worked. I don't have Saturdays or Sundays, no weekends, no holidays. And I work twenty hours a day. Usually I go to sleep at three o'clock in the morning and get up at seven. Four hours is normal for me and I work, work, work. And if you work very hard, God will help you. And God helps me. If you work hard and you go the right way and do not do anything bad to your friends or other people, if your road is straight and clean, then God helps. That's the secret of my success. Others, who don't like this, because they don't want to work hard, will say that Kirsan steals money, or whatever and write to the KGB. Like Bachar Kouatly did here. Dirty things.'

– *In this comic book it also says that as a student you liked to go out and drink. Do you drink?*

'No, no, only a little. At a party or a celebration. Usually one glass of champagne or wine. Not much.'

– *You look very ascetic. Is that what you are?*

'Yes, I don't like to eat much or drink a lot. My hobby is my job. I don't like special dinners or lunches, because I don't feel very comfortable. I think that I waste my time there.'

– *What worldly goods do you appreciate? What is important for you to have? Do you like to go to Paris and buy nice suits and ties?*

'No, my suits are nothing special. I have a Rolls Royce. I have a lot of cars. Porsche, Mercedes, but it doesn't matter to me, cars or diamonds or suits.'

– *Then why do you buy them? Why do you buy a Porsche?*

'Not because I want to buy it, but it's a good car. Both Rolls Royce and Porsche. In Moscow I sit in the Parliament, in Elista I sit in my office, so usually my friends drive them.'

'I work 20 hours a day. I go to sleep at three o'clock and get up at seven.'

– *You have your Rolls Royce in Elista and your Porsche in Moscow?*

'I have Rolls Royces and Porsches in Elista, in Moscow, in the United States.'

– *Is it also part of your personality cult? The gifts that you are giving to people all carry your image. In a way you come across as a modest man, yet at the same time it's Kirsan all over the place.*

'Yes, why? Because Kirsan Ilyumzhinov is a difficult name to pronounce and to remember. I want a clean position and a clean strategy. Why do I meet with everybody, with all the chess players, all the teams here? One reason, because they will see me. My face and who I am. The gifts I give for several reasons. Kirsan, Kirsan. They will not forget my name. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. This is one reason. The second reason are the books. Kirsan is a Kalmyk. The Kalmyk people are a small people. Only four hundred thousand people. Nobody knows about them and now there suddenly is *Kirsan the Kalmyk*. My book with pictures of Elista. It's propaganda for my small nation. Because I am the president of Kalmykia. We want to be well-known in the world.'

– *This is also the reason why you meet with famous people like the Dalai Lama...*

'Yes, the Dalai Lama, the Pope of Rome. I have very close ties with many leaders.'

– *Because these are people who work just as hard as you do? Or just because they are famous?*

'No, no, no. Because it is interesting for me to speak about religion. I think we have one God, and Buddha, Mohammed and Christ are sons of that one God. I discuss this with the Dalai Lama and the Pope and that is most fascinating.'

– *You got into some problems when you went to see Saddam Hussein and proposed to have the Karpov-Kamsky match in Baghdad. Do you see this as a mistake now, something you regret?*

'Ehh, it was a mistake, but it had to do with the fact that FIDE is not yet ready to separate politics and chess. Chess and politics are still very much entwined (clasps his hands in a firm grip). I wanted to show people that we should separate chess from politics. Maybe we are not ready for this, but it was only my first attempt. In Baghdad people like chess. Why can't we organize a chess match there? Because of one leader? It also has to do with my position in Kalmykia. I usually work not only with ministers. I work with the people. Like here. It was the first time the president of FIDE met with all the chess players. The president is in a high position, but I like to come down. In Kalmykia I talk to workers and farmers, because my ministers do not always tell me how things are. They don't want to bother me or hurt me. When I meet people who have problems they can openly say, 'Hey Kirsan, it's your mistake.' That's the approach I like, open and in dialogue.'

– *Is it true that you promised all the people in Kalmykia one hundred dollars if they elected you as president?*

'No, this was a joke of American journalists. Before I was elected as president of Kalmykia I had said that if I were elected I would raise the monthly income of the Kalmyk family to one hundred dollars. Some journalists wrote that the income would be one hundred dollars, some wrote that Kirsan would give one hundred dollars to each family and others even wrote that I was going to give one hundred dollars to each person.'

– *When you went to Baghdad I figured that you were going there for your own business interests or because you were sent there by Moscow because of their close ties with Iraq.*

'No, no. it was my own philosophy. Usually in politics I am independent. What I want I usually do.'

– *But after the idea of the match in Baghdad had been rejected by FIDE you still went there as an official representative of the Russian government to attend Saddam Hussein's birthday.*

'Yes, I was a representative of the Russian leaders, because I am a senator of the parliament. I am a member of the Presidential Council of Boris Yeltsin. I went to Saddam Hussein's birthday and I took the official letter of Boris Yeltsin and gave it to him. Sometimes they ask me to speak to leaders when I am visiting countries.'

– *When there were protests about this match in Baghdad, you said that you had talked to Saddam Hussein and that he was a great statesman. Do you still find this?*

'A great statesman? Yes, yes. Journalists and the mass media depict Saddam Hussein as a dictator. We talked many times, like we are sitting here now, and spoke for hours. Some of his ideas and principles I liked. He is a great personality. He has ideas. I think that leaders of countries should be around the table and not fight each other. That's my philosophy. That's why yesterday after I was elected I invited Bachar to shake hands. I have no problem with this.'

– *Can you really forget what he said?*

'Pff, for me it doesn't really matter. OK, it hurts and it's not good when you trust someone. But I feel normal about it, because life is life.'

– *Do you really believe there is a big future for chess?*

'Yes, ever since last year there has been a revival. Before my election the chess world was divided. Karpov, Kasparov, no match between Karpov and Kamsky, and fighting between the members of FIDE. Now many newspapers are writing that the image of chess is on the rise again. I think there is a great future for chess.'

– *Even so great that there will be five million dollar prize-funds?*

'(Matter-of-factly) Yes, yes, five million, ten million, twenty million. Like in tennis or in boxing. Chess is a clever sport. In the United States people usually say, 'If you are clever, then why aren't you rich?' If chess is the cleverest sport, why then do people who use their hands like in boxing, or who use their feet like in football, why do they earn more money than chess players who think with their heads? The next century will be the century of the intellect. Of high technology. And I think that the salaries in chess will be very high.'

– *So far they have been selling the product wrongly?*

'I look at chess and the income from chess, just like I look at a business. I know how to organize a company. If tomorrow I will no longer be president of Kalmykia or president of FIDE, and I have to start from scratch again and can organize a company, I will make it grow again and in a few years' time I will be rich again. Several years ago I created more than fifty companies and banks. I know how to do this, how to earn money. This is my profession. And I see chess as a business, too.'

– *You say you work twenty hours a day. You're also married with a seven-year-old son. Is it easy to be married to you? Your wife will hardly see you.*

'That's why I said to my wife: 'You elected me as president of the Kalmyk Republic.' She was one of the voters, wasn't she? (Starts laughing heartily) You elected me, so that's why I have to work for all people.'

– *There was this rumour that you were in favour of reintroducing polygamy in your country.*

'That was a joke.'

– *Shouldn't you be more careful with your jokes? Some of them are written down and spread all over the world.*

'They were writing mockingly about the great Kirsan and that probably he was also in favour of polygamy. To which I reacted, 'Why not?''

– *The question that has been raised time and again during the past few days concerns the conflict between the knock-out world championship and the Karpov-Kasparov match. What is your strategy behind this?*

'I think we need time now. Time will tell. In my opinion the knock-out system is the system of the future. Many players from many countries can take part and earn money. And perhaps Karpov and Kasparov will also take part.'

– *So in fact it's better to first have their match and only then the knock-out championship?*

'Yes, I think so.'

– *Some time ago I asked somebody who had been to Elista if you spoke English. The answer was, 'No, but he speaks Japanese fluently.' You even wrote a book in Japanese, didn't you?*

Yes, a crime-story. Next month I hope it will be ready.'

– *How did you pick up your English this quickly?*

'I studied it. Now I also started to study Persian and Chinese. It's fascinating. (With a broad smile) I like well-educated men. That's why I also find it so interesting to study religions. When I studied Buddhism I understood that I should next study Christianity and the Islam.'

– *Which religious book has made the deepest impression on you?*

'The Bible. Very interesting. Very interesting.'

– *You have said that you consider to go into retreat in a monastery one day. Was this a joke or is it a serious plan for the near future?*

'Maybe in a year or two I will go into a monastery to clean myself. To clean myself from politics and business. To talk with God. The last time I visited the Dalai Lama in India, he said: 'Kirsan, if you want you can stay for a month or two.' The Pope has suggested the same to me. He offered me a cell in a monastery in Assisi. It depends on God. If I feel the moment is there I will go into a monastery.'

– *Whatever you do I always have the feeling that you keep a clear eye on your ultimate goal. What is your next goal? President of Russia?*

'(Laughs) My future goal I don't know. But my main goal is to work for people. To work very hard to find out what I am capable of. I want to show myself what I can do. My abilities. This is my aim. I know that everyone will die. I will die in maybe ten or twenty or fifty years and I cannot take my Mercedes or Rolls Royce or my diamonds with me into the ground. They will give me two meters and perhaps a new suit. For the rest nothing. And only my name will stay here. I work for my name. My good name.'

Super-tournaments come and go, but every now and then we see a real super-super tournament. Las Palmas 1996 was one such, on paper the strongest tournament ever held. To nobody's surprise, it was Garry Kasparov who won the event, but the game of the tournament was Anand's spectacular attacking demolition of Anatoly Karpov.

NOTES BY

Vishy Anand

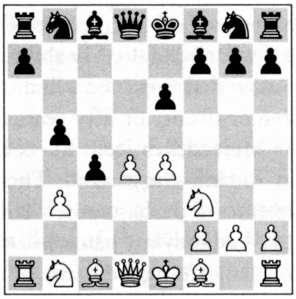
QG 5.1
Vishy Anand
Anatoly Karpov
Las Palmas 1996 (7)

1.♘f3
The previous day I had lost to Kramnik without so much as a struggle and had spent the evening being disgusted with my play. There was no way I could be bothered playing some boring Caro-Kann and trying to deal with some improvement on move 45 leading to a difficult ending etc. I felt I'd rather go down in style than do something like that. Now, how does a move like 1.♘f3 allow me to get interesting positions?? Well, to be honest, 1.♘f3 can lead to positions even more boring than after 1.e4 c6, but at least they would be NEW boring positions!!

1...d5 Aha! Not so boring, maybe? He had played this against Topalov and I had an idea...

2.d4 e6 3.c4 dxc4 4.e4
And I played this without hesitating. Maybe 4.e3 some other time, but I just wanted to liven things up immediately.

4...b5 5.a4 c6 6.axb5 cxb5 7.b3



He had already started thinking a lot and I knew that he wasn't familiar with this opening. There isn't much to know, though, only a game Yermolinsky-Kupreichik, Sverdlovsk 1987.

7...♗b7
7...♘f6 8.bxc4 ♘xe4 9.c5 ♗xc5 10.♗xb5+ ♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7. Kupreichik, not being one of the most solid players I know, could play this. I suspected that Karpov, if confronted with this, would find another solution.

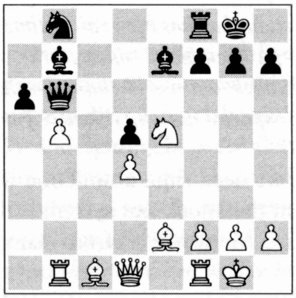
8.bxc4 ♗xe4 9.cxb5
White already has a significant advantage on the queenside - the a-file and pawn b5 vs pawn a7.

9...♘f6 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘c3 ♗b7 13.♘e5 a6
13...♗b4 14.♗b2 ♗xc3 (14...a6 15.♗f3) 15.♗xc3 ♕d5 16.♘f3 or 15...a6 16.♗f3! (rather than 16.♗a5 ♕d5! 17.♗f3 ♕xb5) both lead to a small advantage for White.

14.♗f3 ♘d5
Typically, Karpov finds the safest solution, leaving him with only a slight disadvantage. After 14...♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♕xd4 16.♖e1! ♗b4 (16...♘d5 17.♗b2!) 17.♗b2 Black still has to unravel his queenside.

15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♖b1!
16.♕b3 axb5 17.♖xa8 ♗xa8 18.♕xb5, also with some advantage, but I had no interest in trying to play for some slight advantage that day.

16...♕b6 17.♗e2!!



The point. White can swing his bishop over to

ÁRPOV
ANAND

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

One of over 100 games played between these two chess greats, over the past 20 years or so.

d3 now. I considered moves like 17.♕d3, but realized that the text was the strongest move - the bishop has no more work on f3.

17...axb5

There is no other way - 17...a5 would leave White with the monster on b5.

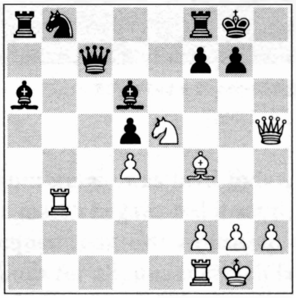
18.♖xb5 ♕c7 19.♗f4 ♗d6 20.♗d3 ♗a6

Here, I spent a few seconds checking 21.♖xd5, which leaves White with an extra pawn, but as I mentioned earlier, I couldn't be bothered. I saw ♗h7 and didn't waste any more time on ♖d5. I then spent some time analysing ♗h7, and didn't see a defence for Black. I then realized that I was too excited to analyse and decided to get it over with. He had hardly any time left already, and I was sure he wouldn't find a defence.

21.♗xh7+!

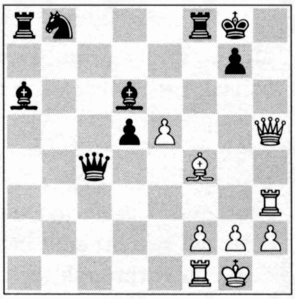
In the press centre they had been expecting 21.♖xd5, but my close friend Mauricio Perea knew immediately that I would play 21.♗xh7+!, and he tried to work out all the details.

21...♔xh7 22.♕h5+ ♔g8 23.♖b3

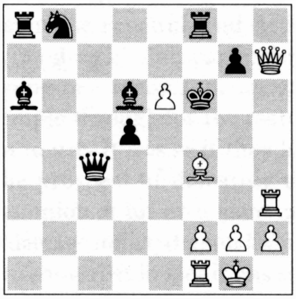


23...♗xe5?

This loses trivially. During the game I was more worried about 23...♗c8 than about 23...f6, but later analysis suggests that the latter was the best move: 23...f6! 24.♖h3 fxe5 25.dxe5 ♕c4! (25...♖xf4 26.e6 ♔f8 27.♕h8+ ♔e7 28.♕xg7+ ♔xe6 29.♖e1+! ♖e4 30.♖h6+, and it's over), and now:



A) 26.♕h7+ ♔f7 27.e6+ ♔f6 (27...♔xe6 is refuted by 28.♖e1+!, and 27...♔e8 28.♕g6+ ♔d8 29.♗g5+ ♔c8 30.♖c1 is also unattractive), with further ramifications:

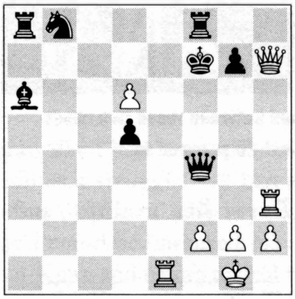


A1) 28.♖h6+? gxh6 29.♕xh6+ ♔f5 (29...♔e7 fails to 30.♗g5+) 30.g4+ ♔e4 31.

♖e1+ ♕e2! (after 31...♔d3 32.♕g6+ ♔d4 33.♗xd6 Fritz will probably tell you more than I could, but 31...♕e2 is good) 32.♖xe2+ ♗xe2 33.♗xd6 ♖a1+ 34.♔g2 ♗f1+! 35.♔g3 ♖f3+ 36.♔h4 ♖h3+, and Black is winning;

A2) 28.♗g5+ ♔xe6 29.♖e1+ ♔d7 30.♕xg7+ ♔c6 31.♖c3 ♘d7 32.♖xc4+ ♗xc4 is unclear. White has a lot of pawns on the kingside, but since Black's king is now safe he can activate his pieces.

B) 26.♖e1! is much simpler - White doesn't invest too much material: 26...♕xf4 27.♕h7+ ♔f7 28.exd6



B1) 28...♖e8 29.♕h5+ g6 30.♖e7+!! was indicated by Fritz. There is no defence: 30...♖xe7 (30...♔f6 31.♕f3!) 31.♕h7+ ♔f6 (31...♔f8 32.dxe7+ ♔e8 33.♕xg6+ ♔xe7 34.♖h7+) 32.♕xe7+ ♔f5 33.♕f8+! ♔e5 34.♖e3+;

B2) 28...♘c6 29.♖f3 ♕xf3 30.gxf3 ♗c4 and here, both 31.h4 and 31.♔h1 are dangerous.

Still, to find your way through the complications with limited time over the board isn't the easiest thing in the world, and Karpov didn't manage it this time.

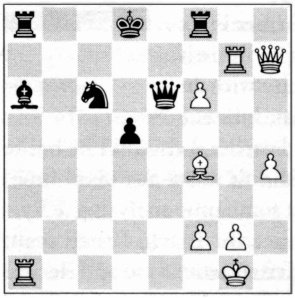
I hadn't analysed the alternative 23...♗c8?! well. Later I asked Karpov what he saw against it and he said that he assumed 24.♖g3 would win. I showed him 24...♕e7, and we thought that this would have saved Black. Later (according to my second, Ubilava), Dzindzi found the way for White: 24.♖g3 ♕e7 25.♗h6! (25.♗g5 ♕e6 26.♗h6 ♗xe5 27.dxe5 g6 28.♗xf8 ♔xf8 is not clear) 25...♗xe5 26.dxe5 g6, and now 27.e6!! Black is lost after both 27...♕xe6 28.♗xf8 and 27...♗xe6 28.♕e5 f6 29.♖xg6+.

24.♖h3 f6 25.dxe5 ♕e7

25...♕c4 26.♖e1! ♕xf4 27.♕h7+ ♔f7 28.e6+ ♔e8 29.♕g6+ is no use either.

26.♕h7+ ♔f7 27.♖g3 ♔e8 27...♖g8 28.♕g6+ ♔f8 29.exf6, and Black can't recapture.

28.♖xg7 ♕e6 29.exf6 ♘c6 30.♖a1 ♔d8 31.h4



To clear the back rank - it's always nice to have time for the details.

31...♗b7 32.♖c1 ♗a6 33.♖a1

I felt it would be better to have the rook on d1 and I was sure that Karpov would be grateful to repeat moves to get to the time control...

33...♗b7 34.♖d1 ♗a6 35.♕b1! ♖xf6 36.♗g5

Karpov lost on time playing 36...♔c8.

Obviously I was delighted to have won after a loss, but I was especially happy with the way in which I won.

Some said it would never happen. Others thought it inevitable, sooner or later. But few thought it would happen as early as 1997. On a momentous day for carbon-based life, the world chess champion lost a match against a computer, for the first time ever. Chess would never be quite the same again.

Kasparov self-destructs in Deep Blue rematch

Patrick Wolff

the rematch
GARRY KASPAROV

Kasparov v super-computer. But surely the clock is the star of the show?

May 1

A press conference was held today, two days before the match began, and it set the tone for the subsequent contest: a pleasant veneer of good feelings for all, under which lay the tremendous desire of both sides to win. The leader of the IBM team, C.J. Tan, emphasized the importance this match would have for computer technology. 'The capabilities our research for this match have developed for the computer will soon have wide applicability for many problems of grave human concern, for example to hasten the research and development of life-saving drugs.' This particular example of developing new medical drugs was the favorite example throughout the match for the IBM team to use. It was as if they had decided that the prospect of defeating the World Chess Champion at his own game was a kind of mortal damage inflicted upon humanity, and they had to show that in fact it was serving the greater purpose of helping humanity. In this venture, C.J. Tan went so far as to refer to Kasparov as a 'partner'.

Kasparov, for his part, spoke eloquently of the good this match would do for computers and for chess. He reiterated the IBM team's message about computer technology, and also said that this match would bring chess to millions of people who had never before played the game. He emphasized particularly how much children would enjoy chess, and that children also enjoyed using computers.

All well and good. But let's not kid ourselves. IBM was holding this match because of its enormous publicity value to them, not as a noble experiment for the good of mankind. Maybe the work done on this match would have some wider applicability, but the main reason to hold it is the bottom line of positive publicity. As for the IBM team itself, they had invested so much time and energy in preparing for the match that they wanted desperately to win. And they were confident enough they could win that they couldn't resist needling Garry. When the colors were drawn and it turned out that this time Garry would have White in the first game (instead of Deep Blue as in 1996) C.J. Tan said, 'History will repeat itself, in a mirror image.' In other words, this time Deep Blue would win the match 4-2.

Of course it will surprise nobody that Garry also wanted desperately to win. What was striking was that he was clearly nervous about the match. The first match against IBM, versus Deep Thought in 1989, he said was 'just for fun.' The second match, held last year in 1996 against the earlier version of Deep Blue, he said was a 'scientific experiment.' But this match was 'serious,' and he acknowledged that he could lose it.

Nevertheless, he still predicted that he would win by the same score, 4-2, as he won last year. The difference would be his superior preparation. For the match last year, he had done almost no work. For this match, he had taken a long time, perhaps as long as a month, to prepare. Part of his match preparation seems to have been to complain about the match conditions. Several times he mentioned that the IBM team could study all of his games throughout his career, whereas he literally had no games to study of Deep Blue. (This program has the same name as the opponent Garry faced in 1996, but it is a different entity, so the games from 1996 would be of dubious value at best.) If he could have ten games of Deep Blue to study, he said, he would beat it easily. But because he would be 'shooting in the dark,' he would run the risk of losing. The mainstream media, who knew almost nothing about chess, quickly picked up on this point, and poor C.J. Tan was asked questions like, 'Isn't it unfair not to let Garry see any of Deep Blue's games?' If Garry was a 'partner' in this joint venture with IBM, he certainly wasn't bending over backwards to help their positive publicity.

Still, the question Garry raised is an interesting one. Is it unfair not to be able to study any of Deep Blue's previous games? More generally, what constitutes a 'fair' match? One obvious answer suggests itself: Any match is fair so long as both sides agree to the terms without being coerced. And no doubt this is true, as far as it goes. But of course this doesn't get to the interesting question, which is this: What conditions should both parties operate under for such a match to accurately 'test' the abilities of human and computer to play chess?

When humans play one another, the obvious answer is that so long as the conditions are equal, the match result will be fair.

One might want to question how far one must go to hold conditions equal in order for the match to be fair (For example, is it 'fair' that Kasparov has more money to spend on training and preparations than his challengers?), but at least the basic principle is unchallenged. Since we humans are all of the same species, we have no problems saying physical or constitutional differences are part of what makes up a chess player's 'skill', and that therefore they are his own responsibility (regardless of whether their origin is due to his own efforts). For example, except for extreme cases of illness or personal tragedy, if you keep the conditions equal, factors like one's stamina or one's memory are one's own responsibility and hence part of what we assign to one's skill.

But when we talk about computer versus human, we are talking about radically different entities, so we may not be as confident about what we should assign to one's own responsibility, and hence to one's skill. (And by the way, can a computer be 'responsible' for anything? Maybe it's the programmers who ultimately must bear the brunt of this responsibility, and hence whose 'skill' we are really testing through the medium of chess?) Would Kasparov show himself to be 'really' better than the machine if he could only study some of its games? Or is it perfectly legitimate for the machine to compensate for its weakness by not playing any public games before this match? Should Kasparov have access to his opening notes, because after all the computer is essentially 'reading' its own notes in its memory banks? Or is Kasparov's pitifully weak memory (by computer standards only!) merely one of his weaknesses as a chess player?

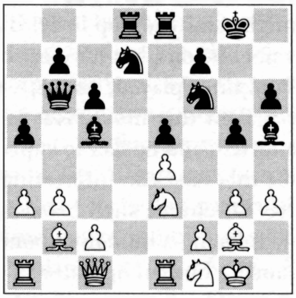
My own view is that these questions have no obvious answer, but that they should serve to highlight that we make a mistake in thinking that this match is any sort of 'test' at all of the computer's 'real' ability to play chess versus our best human's 'real' ability to play chess. This match is a competition, and its constraints have been chosen somewhat arbitrarily. Change the constraints, and you change the nature of the competition. And of course, the computer cannot really 'compete' at all: To compete one must have the selfconscious awareness that one is competing, and that is something this machine lacks. A better way to look at it is that Garry Kasparov is doing the chess equivalent of trying to lift a very heavy weight over his head. From a chess perspective, he is 'competing' against himself, or perhaps against how other chess players would do under similar circumstances. If anyone from IBM is 'competing' against Garry, it is the programmers who have constructed this formidable mental challenge. The competition is to see whether Garry can 'lift' this new, bigger weight over his head given the agreed constraints.

What, then, would be 'fair' conditions? So long as both parties negotiate without coercion, and keep to their agreements, the question is the wrong one to ask. A better question is, 'How do we want to set the parameters of this competition?' Only time will tell how future competitions will be set. For now, we will have to see how Garry will perform under the conditions he has agreed to.

May 3, Game 1

Garry Kasparov-Deep Blue New York 1997 (1)

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 ♗g4 3.b3 ♘d7 4.♗b2 e6 5.♗g2 ♘gf6 6.0-0 c6 7.d3 ♗d6 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.h3 ♗h5 10.e3 h6 11.♕e1 ♕a5 12.a3 ♗c7 13.♘h4 g5 14.♘hf3 e5 15.e4 ♖fe8 16.♘h2 ♕b6 17.♕c1 a5 18.♖e1 ♗d6 19.♘df1 dxe4 20.dxe4 ♗c5 21.♘e3 ♖ad8 22.♘hf1



22...g4 23.hxg4 ♘xg4 24.f3 ♘xe3 25.♘xe3 ♗e7 26.♔h1 ♗g5 27.♖e2 a4 28.b4 f5 29.exf5 e4 30.f4 ♗xe2 31.fxg5 ♘e5 32.g6 ♗f3 33.♗c3 ♕b5 34.♕f1 ♕xf1+ 35.♖xf1 h5 36.♔g1 ♔f8 37.♗h3 b5 38.♔f2 ♔g7 39.g4 ♔h6 40.♖g1 hxg4 41.♗xg4 ♗xg4 42.♘xg4+ ♘xg4+ 43.♖xg4 ♖d5 44.f6 ♖d1 45.g7 1-0

Kasparov played slowly in the opening of game 1, and his strategy soon bore fruit as Deep Blue quickly misplaced its pieces with 11...♕a5?! and 12...♗c7?. This last move was particularly bad, as it made it difficult for Black to recall the queen to the kingside when necessary. Kasparov was quick to pounce on the error with 13.♘h4!? with the idea of 14.g4 and 15.♘g6 (although an immediate 14.g4 could be met by 14...g5!?, so it's not clear whether it was really a threat right away).

Deep Blue reacted in a way that perhaps no human grandmaster could have brought himself to do: 13...g5 14.♘hf3 e5. Yet the reaction may not have been so bad: Kasparov admitted in the press conference after the game that although he thought at first that the computer must be strategically lost at this point, deeper consideration forced him to acknowledge that its spatial advantage and its control of the center made it quite difficult to exploit the weakened kingside.

As it was, Kasparov maneuvered very skillfully to gain some pull, and in particular 17.♕c1!

was a fine move, to enable the knight maneuver and also to eye the weakened kingside. (Yet in my view, the computer could have improved over 17...a5?! with 17...♗d6! with the idea of meeting 18.♖e1 with 18...♗c5.) The game's first critical moment arose after 22.♘hf1. As GM John Nunn pointed out, White's plan at this point was 23.♘d2 and 24.♘dc4 (with the idea that 24...♕a7 be met by 25.b4), to dislodge the queen and bishop battery against f2 and enable the knight on e3 to hop to f5. Black's best reaction is not obvious, but it's clear that it isn't what the computer played: 22...g4?. When the computer played this move, Kasparov's face visibly contorted, and he had to suppress a giggle. (Maybe this raises an interesting question of etiquette: Of course such behavior is inexcusable when facing a human opponent, but is it rude against a human operator of a computer opponent? The computer needs a human operator because someone needs to type in the moves and make the computer's responses and push the clock. Is this operator an extension of the computer, whom one should not disturb?)

Yet silly computer moves often are difficult to exploit. The computer may create unnecessary weaknesses, but it is very hard to exploit them! Kasparov played inaccurately on move 24 (everyone agreed later that 24.♘g4 ♗g4 25.♘e3 would have been better), and Deep Blue 'found' an excellent resource with 25...♗e7!. Kasparov admitted after the game that he had overlooked this move. He had been so mesmerized by the strong c5-g1 diagonal that he had not considered that the bishop might find another diagonal. (Computers, of course, do not suffer this kind of preconception, because they have no conceptions at all.)

Nevertheless, although Kasparov may not have played the best in the subsequent few moves (26.♕d2 ♗g5 27.♕f2 suggests itself as one way to keep an edge, and also after 26.♔h1 ♗g5, 27.f4!? exf4 28.♘f5 is interesting), he played well enough to be able to parry the computer's lunge on move 28 (the second critical position of the game). In the press room, Deep Blue's amazing 28th move created a huge excitement, and many of us thought that Kasparov, who was getting short on time, might succumb to the computer's tactical onslaught. But Garry showed his stuff in making a strong exchange sacrifice (notice that 30...♗f4? 31.gxf4 ♗e2 runs into disaster after 32.♕d2 and 33.♕c3, and 31...♘e5 was forced to block the long diagonal: 31...hg5?? 32.♘d5!+–), and after 32.g6 White's connected passed pawns compensated for the slight material deficit.

The third critical position arose after 32...♗f3 33.♗c3! (an excellent prophylactic move to stop any future rook incursions on d2), when the computer made a truly horrible pair of moves. The connected passed pawns will come into their own in an endgame, so Black should avoid the trade of queens at all cost. But Deep Blue probably 'thought' (or more properly speaking: evaluated the subsequent positions more highly) that the exchange of queens would be good because after all, when you are ahead in material but your king is exposed, don't you want to trade queens? Yet after the exchange of queens, White's advantage was indisputable.

Black could have played better (for example, 36...♘g4!? instead of 36...♔f8?, and certainly not 38...♔g7?), but the result of the game then followed logically from the assessment of the position.

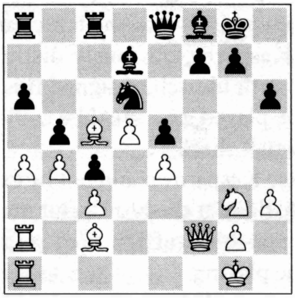
So here we saw a 'typical' human versus computer game. The computer cannot form a plan and so makes some illogical moves, it is too eager to weaken its position simply because it sees no immediate way for the weaknesses to be exploited, and it misevaluates positions with material imbalances. The human, for his part, some times gets careless, sometimes lets his over- excitement get the better of him (Kasparov's incredulity after 22...g4), and has to weather a tough tactical storm to take advantage of his strategic advantages. However, if there is anyone to weather tough tactical storms, it is surely Garry Kasparov. If this pattern can be repeated, he will be happy with the course of the match.

May 4, Game 2

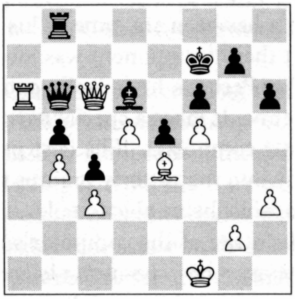
Deep Blue-Garry Kasparov New York 1997 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.d4 ♖e8 11.♘bd2 ♗f8 12.♘f1 ♗d7 13.♘g3 ♘a5 14.♗c2 c5 15.b3 ♘c6 16.d5 ♘e7 17.♗e3 ♘g6

18.♕d2 ♘h7 19.a4 ♘h4 20.♘xh4 ♕xh4 21.♕e2 ♕d8 22.b4 ♕c7 23.♖ec1 c4 24.♖a3 ♖ec8 25.♖ca1 ♕d8 26.f4 ♘f6 27.fxe5 dxe5 28.♕f1 ♘e8 29.♕f2 ♘d6 30.♗b6 ♕e8 31.♖3a2 ♗e7 32.♗c5 ♗f8



33.♘f5 ♗xf5 34.exf5 f6 35.♗xd6 ♗xd6 36.axb5 axb5 37.♗e4 ♖xa2 38.♕xa2 ♕d7 39.♕a7 ♖c7 40.♕b6 ♖b7 41.♖a8+ ♔f7 42.♕a6 ♕c7 43.♕c6 ♕b6+ 44.♔f1 ♖b8 45.♖a6



1-0

C.J. Tan's prediction that history would repeat itself in a mirror image started to look plausible after Game 2. In the first match, Kasparov lost the first game with black, and then won the second game. This time Deep Blue lost the first game with black and then came back to win Game 2. And what a wonderful game! Except for one large error at the end of the game, I think that any grandmaster in the world would be extremely proud to play the game Deep Blue played.

Kasparov's choice of opening was rather strange. Usually one tries to keep the game closed with black against the computer, for example by playing a Pirc or a French Defense. Perhaps he expected a Scotch Game (as Deep Blue played in 1996), where he had worked out some specific analysis. Or perhaps he simply thought that if Deep Blue could be induced to close the center (as it did on move 16), then Black's objective disadvantage would be outweighed by the fact that the computer has difficulty playing closed positions.

The course of the game showed that there were two problems with this strategy. First, this computer seems capable of playing chess at a much higher level in such positions than any other computer we have ever seen. Second, Kasparov simply is not at home in such positions. Generally speaking, he does not play positions that require purely passive play nearly so well as positions that require active counterplay; and more specifically, he is not familiar with the plans and the relative merits of various pawn structures and piece placements for this particular opening.

John Nunn suggests quite reasonably that Kasparov's plan of 17...♘g6, 18...♘h7, and 19...♘h4 was mistaken, because it wastes too much time going for illusory counterplay, when Black would do much better to consolidate his weakened queenside. Still, one must sympathize with Kasparov, who probably just couldn't believe that the computer could play such moves as 19.a4!, 21.♕e2! and 22.b4!? – that is to say, moves of a strategic nature, intended to make progress on the queenside before the nature of that progress can be clearly seen.

Perhaps here is the place to mention the work of the grandmaster member of the IBM team: GM Joel Benjamin. For more than a year, Joel has worked 50 hours a week with the IBM team to test the computer's evaluation functions so that they could be refined. This version of Deep Blue can only see half a ply further than the version Kasparov faced in 1996, which in terms of sheer computing power is not so much. The IBM team has insisted that the main progress made on this machine was in its programming rather than in its computing power, and much of that progress is due to the contributions of Joel Benjamin. I must admit that I had been skeptical of that progress before the match began, but the course of this game is enough to make a believer out of anyone!

Kasparov's discomfort with the middlegame this opening produces, meanwhile, can be seen throughout the game. For example it is possible to object to his 23rd move, 23...c4?!. John Nunn prefers 23...♕b7, while IM David Goodman and I believe that 23...cxb4 24.cxb4 and then 24...♕b7 would have been better. But again, probably Kasparov simply didn't believe that he would be punished by a computer in such a closed position. Of particular note is 26.f4!, not just a very strong move from an objective standpoint, but a particularly difficult move for a computer to play. Nunn claims to have given this position to several home computer programs, and none of them found it. (But then, Kasparov himself said at the May 1 press conference that he couldn't play useful practice games against his own computer because it would take it several hours to find moves Deep Blue would play in several minutes!) For a human grandmaster, such a move is routine, but it is very difficult to 'explain' to a computer that in this position it's necessary to slightly spoil White's pawn structure in order to open up a second front.

Yet there were even more remarkable moves to follow. Deep Blue's 33rd move, 33.♘f5!, is a fine move for computer or human alike. Once again White's slightly 'spoils' the pawn structure in order to break down Black's defenses. White's 35th move, 35.♗xd6! shows a correct understanding that the opposite-colored bishops favors White in this position. But most impressive of all was 36.axb5!! and 37.♗e4!!. These moves were impressive not so much for themselves as for what the computer eschewed: 36.♕b6 ♖d8 (36...♗c7 37.♕e6+! ♕xe6 38.dxe6 is probably winning for White) 37.axb5 ♖ab8 38.♕xa6 e4, and although White may have some accurate way to consolidate, Black has suddenly gotten counterplay on the dark squares with 39...♕e5 and possibly ...e3 to follow.

The rest was anti-climax. Yet it did not have to be. So mesmerized were all the assembled grandmasters at the match site (including Kasparov himself!) that no one noticed that Kasparov had resigned in one of the best positions he had had throughout the entire game! First, one should note that had White played 44.♔h1! instead of 44.♔f1??, the computer would almost certainly have won the game. If Black exchanges queens on c6 then after White recaptures with dxc6 Black will be so tied up as to be in dire straits. But after 44.♔h1 ♖b8 45.♖a6 ♕e3 46.♕xd6 ♖e8, with the king on hl instead of fl White wins with 47.♖a1! ♕xe4 48.♖a7+ ♔g8 49.♕d7 because now there is no perpetual check.

The final position deserves close scrutiny. By my recollection, it is the first time Kasparov has resigned a position where he has clear drawing chances. Kasparov, obviously distraught and disgusted with himself, resigned this position. But had he played 45...♕e3! he could have set up a perpetual check.

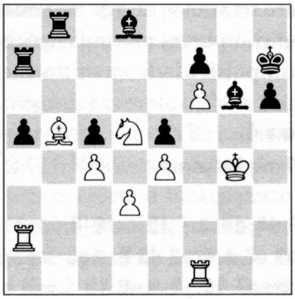
Of course Kasparov could not be expected to see all variations at the board. But one only has to see the possibility of 45...♕e3 46.♕xd6 ♖e8 to continue playing.

What happened? My only explanation is that Kasparov was tired, distraught, and intimidated: all very human weaknesses. Perhaps the intimidation is the most significant of them all. No doubt Kasparov has been tired many times in his chess career, and also distraught. But I doubt there has been any time in his life when he has felt that his opponent was more powerful than he. Perhaps he is feeling this for the very first time. It takes a special psychology to play against computers. The best psychology is probably one that utterly ignores the opponent, even while being able to tailor one's game to take advantage of the computer's very glaring weaknesses. Garry has never been one to ignore his opponent, however. Indeed, he often seems to feed off his opponent's emotions. Perhaps, then, the computer poses a special challenge to Kasparov. How strange it will be if this moment turns out to be decisive in the result of the entire match!

May 6, Game 3

Garry Kasparov-Deep Blue New York 1997 (3)

1.d3 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c4 ♘f6 4.a3 d6 5.♘c3 ♗e7 6.g3 0-0 7.♗g2 ♗e6 8.0-0 ♕d7 9.♘g5 ♗f5 10.e4 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗h5 12.♘h3 ♘d4 13.♘f2 h6 14.♗e3 c5 15.b4 b6 16.♖b1 ♔h8 17.♖b2 a6 18.bxc5 bxc5 19.♗h3 ♕c7 20.♗g4 ♗g6 21.f4 exf4 22.gxf4 ♕a5 23.♗d2 ♕xa3 24.♖a2 ♕b3 25.f5 ♕xd1 26.♗xd1 ♗h7 27.♘h3 ♖fb8 28.♘f4 ♗d8 29.♘fd5 ♘c6 30.♗f4 ♘e5 31.♗a4 ♘xd5 32.♘xd5 a5 33.♗b5 ♖a7 34.♔g2 g5 35.♗xe5+ dxe5 36.f6 ♗g6 37.h4 gxh4 38.♔h3 ♔g8 39.♔xh4 ♔h7 40.♔g4



40...♗c7 41.♘xc7 ♖xc7 42.♖xa5 ♖d8 43.♖f3 ♔h8 44.♔h4 ♔g8 45.♖a3 ♔h8 46.♖a6 ♔h7 47.♖a3 ♔h8 48.♖a6 ½-½

Neither 'player' was in good form today. That Deep Blue did not play well means that the opening produced a position the computer has difficulty playing. That Kasparov did not play well means that he is probably still affected by the loss in Game 2, even with a rest day to recover.

It's difficult to get excited about this game. Its most remarkable features are its opening, and the remarks made by both sides in the press conference concluding it. Still, there are many objectively interesting positions in this game, and it would probably repay close study at some point.

It's quite funny to see the normally hyper-aggressive Kasparov play 1.d3, but it's easy to understand his motivation. And indeed, he quickly got a strong position. Isn't there some way to tell the computer that it should play 5...g6 and 6...♗g7 rather than 5...♗e7? I suppose this would have to be programmed directly into its opening book, because otherwise who could fault it for following the advice of developing and castling as quickly as possible? Of course a strong human player understands that the one extra tempo spent fianchettoing the bishop is nothing compared to how much better it will be placed there in the long run – but the 'long run' is precisely what the computer doesn't understand.

Kasparov used more than half an hour on move 9, which to me indicates that he was not thinking clearly: half an hour is just too long to take here. Afterward he claimed that 9.b4 would have been better than the move he played, but already by move 17 he had quite a nice position (helped by the computer's idiotic 16...♔h8?, it is true). However, he seemed unable to find a continuation that really satisfied him, and for some reason he declined to play the obvious yet reasonable 17.g4 ♗g6 18.f4. Was he trying to entice the computer to capture the pawn on f3? (either capture on move 19 is a mistake: 19...♘xf3+?? 20.♔h1 and 21.g4+–; 19...♗xf3 20.♗xd7 ♗xd1 21.♘fxd1! ♘xd7 22.♖b7 gives White good pressure.) If so, it didn't work, and with 22...♕a5! the computer had gotten counterplay. Kasparov managed to keep control of the game, and after 34...g5?! (34...f6 is more solid) it even looked like he might have winning chances again. But the computer defended accurately with 40...♗c7!, with the idea of 41...♗d6 and 42...♗f8 (and 41.♘e7 is correctly met by 41...♖ab7! and Black is okay), and Kasparov had to give away most of his advantage to regain the pawn. A draw soon ensued.

But although the game was over for the day, the fight had only just begun! Kasparov, it turned out, still had Game 2 on his mind. Yet rather than focus on his own mistakes, he wanted to know how the computer could have played as it did: 'Anyone who knows about chess and computers will understand that what we saw in Game 2 was very different than what we saw in Games 1 and 3.

Those games were more normal 'computer' games, whereas what we saw in Game 2 was already a sign of intelligence.'

It sounded like praise at first, until Garry continued, 'I don't understand how a computer – any computer – can possibly not play the move 36.♕b6, when the move has no tactical problems. And I researched this move very, very deeply with the help of computers, and I can say that maybe 20 or 25 ply deep, the position is still very playable for White, with a big material advantage. I think it is impossible for a computer not to play this move without some kind of human intervention.'

Human intervention? Was Garry implying that the IBM team had cheated? 'It's a mistake to ask another computer and think you're gauging computer thought', replied Joel Benjamin. 'Maybe Garry ought to come to grips with the fact that Deep Blue can do things no other computer can do.'

But Kasparov insisted he was not 'comparing behavior.' Rather, he used the computer to help research the position, and according to his understanding of how any computer would approach the position, a computer left to its own would have to play 36.♕b6. He said, 'You know, when Maradona used his hand to score a goal, he called it the 'hand of God'. I think maybe something similar happened here.' When I asked some of Kasparov's close friends at the match, they confirmed that indeed he thought it was possible that the IBM team had cheated.

Why was he doing this? It's understandable to have paranoid thoughts after such a disappointing loss, but with two days to regain one's composure, one ought to be able to recognize them as expressions of one's own feelings rather than as an objective appraisal of the situation. After all, what positive evidence did he have? None: only the mere fact that the computer had made some impressive decisions. Is it impossible for a computer to make such decisions? No: it would be difficult, but entirely possible, to adjust how it evaluates positions so as to make it refrain from capturing two extra pawns (especially when the extra pawns would be doubled) when doing so allows a certain kind of counterplay against the king with opposite-colored bishops. And anyway, how is such a conspiracy to be carried out? One or more very respected grandmasters must be willing to do something which if it were ever discovered would absolutely ruin his reputation.

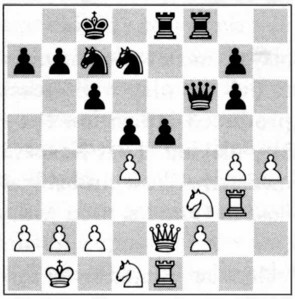
And of course, the grandmaster(s) must be careful not to override a correct decision by Deep Blue! All in all, seen in the cold light of reason, the hypothesis is mad.

But more: Why imply it publicly, once one has had time to recover one's composure? IBM, after all, has put and is putting a lot of money into Garry's pocket, and if things go well with this match they might put quite a lot more there. The one thing that might spoil it is for Garry to demonstrate that he can't be trusted to promote IBM's positive publicity. Of course if you think there is good reason to believe that IBM has done something wrong you must say it, but here there is obviously no such reason. Fortunately for Garry, and for all of us who hope chess will benefit from future IBM sponsorship, the mainstream press did not make much of it. Still, in the future IBM may decide that one of the advantages of computers playing chess is that they are not so impulsive in front of the media.

May 7, Game 4

Deep Blue-Garry Kasparov New York 1997 (4)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.h3 ♗h5 6.♗d3 e6 7.♕e2 d5 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.e5 ♘fd7 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.g4 ♗g6 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.h4 ♘a6 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.♖dg1 ♘c7 16.♔b1 f6 17.exf6 ♕xf6 18.♖g3 ♖de8 19.♖e1 ♖hf8 20.♘d1 e5



21.dxe5 ♕f4 22.a3 ♘e6 23.♘c3 ♘dc5 24.b4 ♘d7 25.♕d3 ♕f7 26.b5 ♘dc5 27.♕e3 ♕f4 28.bxc6 bxc6 29.♖d1 ♔c7 30.♔a1 ♕xe3 31.fxe3 ♖f7 32.♖h3 ♖ef8 33.♘d4 ♖f2 34.♖b1 ♖g2 35.♘ce2 ♖xg4 36.♘xe6+ ♘xe6 37.♘d4 ♘xd4 38.exd4 ♖xd4 39.♖g1 ♖c4 40.♖xg6 ♖xc2 41.♖xg7+ ♔b6 42.♖b3+ ♔c5 43.♖xa7 ♖f1+ 44.♖b1 ♖ff2 45.♖b4 ♖c1+ 46.♖b1 ♖cc2 47.♖b4 ♖c1+ 48.♖b1 ♖xb1+ 49.♔xb1 ♖e2 50.♖e7 ♖h2 51.♖h7 ♔c4 52.♖c7 c5 53.e6 ♖xh4 54.e7 ♖e4 55.a4 ♔b3 56.♔c1 ½-½

Garry missed a tremendous chance today to beat the machine with the black pieces in this game. Two things seem clear to me after this game. First, for whatever reason, Garry is simply not in his best form. In better form, he would certainly have won this game today (although he deserves high praise for his handling of the position in the early middlegame, especially the pawn sacrifice). Second, his strategy of playing offbeat openings to take the computer out of its preparation and into positions it will not feel comfortable in seems to be having a bad effect on Garry himself: Garry is using a lot of time in the opening, and he does not always look comfortable in the positions he is getting. Even when he achieves a good position, it seems to take a lot of energy out of him.

An interesting example of how much energy Garry's approach cost can be seen on move 12. After 12.♗xg6 Black can recapture either way. Which one is correct? It makes perfect sense to play 12...fxg6 followed by castling kingside and hitting the center with ...c5 and ...♘c6. The weakness of the f-file compensates for the disruption of Black's pawns, and the king generally would be quite safe behind the doubled g-pawns and h-pawn. Garry took some time to make this decision, and it must have irked him. He is used to knowing the answer to such questions before the game!

However, Kasparov's strategy did bear fruit by inducing such moves from the computer as 15.♖dg1? and 16.♔b1?!, which highlight the computer's traditional problem with choosing good moves in positions that require long-term planning. Also, perhaps, the computer failed to evaluate correctly the position after 16...f6! and 17...♕xf6!. It may have thought that Black's doubled, isolated pawns constituted a serious disadvantage, whereas they were less important than the activity Black gained for his pieces.

The position after 20...e5! deserves close attention. It's quite striking how quickly Black's compensation asserted itself. Black was soon clearly better.

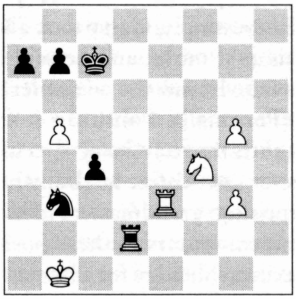
Why, then, did Kasparov not win the game? There were many places Kasparov could have played differently, but two things in particular bear mention. First, would Kasparov have chosen to exchange queens on move 30 rather than play for attack with a move like 30...♕c4!? had he been playing a human? Not that Kasparov's decision can be faulted, since the endgame he reached was very good, and indeed the computer played some weak moves immediately following the exchange. Still, it's an interesting moment in the game. But second, as pointed out by Kasparov himself after the game, 35...♖xg4? was too quick: 35...♖ff2 would have been much stronger. The computer finally started playing some good moves just in time with 37.♘d4 to reach the double-rook endgame after the time control. Although the endgame is complicated, my own analysis suggests to me that it is drawn, an assessment Kasparov gave after the game.

Several times in the press conference Kasparov said how tired he was. There is no question this match is taking its toll on him. However, he now has two days to rest before playing the last two games, and an objective analysis of the games shows that Kasparov is playing better than the computer. I see no reason why he shouldn't be able to achieve +1 in the next two games.

May 10, Game 5

Garry Kasparov-Deep Blue New York 1997 (5)

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 ♗g4 3.♗g2 ♘d7 4.h3 ♗xf3 5.♗xf3 c6 6.d3 e6 7.e4 ♘e5 8.♗g2 dxe4 9.♗xe4 ♘f6 10.♗g2 ♗b4+ 11.♘d2 h5 12.♕e2 ♕c7 13.c3 ♗e7 14.d4 ♘g6 15.h4 e5 16.♘f3 exd4 17.♘xd4 0-0-0 18.♗g5 ♘g4 19.0-0-0 ♖he8 20.♕c2 ♔b8 21.♔b1 ♗xg5 22.hxg5 ♘6e5 23.♖he1 c5 24.♘f3 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♘c4 26.♕a4 ♖d8 27.♖e1 ♘b6 28.♕c2 ♕d6 29.c4 ♕g6 30.♕xg6 fxg6 31.b3 ♘xf2 32.♖e6 ♔c7 33.♖xg6 ♖d7 34.♘h4 ♘c8 35.♗d5 ♘d6 36.♖e6 ♘b5 37.cxb5 ♖xd5 38.♖g6 ♖d7 39.♘f5 ♘e4 40.♘xg7 ♖d1+ 41.♔c2 ♖d2+ 42.♔c1 ♖xa2 43.♘xh5 ♘d2 44.♘f4 ♘xb3+ 45.♔b1 ♖d2 46.♖e6 c4 47.♖e3



47...♔b6 48.g6 ♔xb5 49.g7 ♔b4 ½-½

Kasparov called this 'the cleanest game of the match,' and I agree. Although the computer quickly got a disadvantage in the opening (4...♗xf3 is irregular though not necessarily bad, but 7...♘e5?! loses time as the knight will eventually be kicked back, and 8...dxe4? is just a clear positional mistake, as it opens the diagonal of the bishop), it also played some strong moves to fight back (11...h5!? fights for either the f4 or the g4-square, which increases the power of the knights, and 15...e5! was absolutely necessary to fight for space and active pieces). A subtle analysis would be necessary to figure out how White could have cemented his opening advantage. Some ideas: maybe 13.0-0 instead of 13.c3, with the idea that 13...h4 is met by 14.f4 ♘g6 (14...♘ed7 15.g4) 15.f5; maybe 17.cxd4 instead of 17.♘xd4 (Garry thought several minutes on this decision); maybe 18.0-0 instead of 18.♗g5; maybe even 21.♗e7 instead of 21.♔b1 would have been good for a small edge. At any rate, after 21...♗xg5 22.hxg5 ♘6e5! (with the point that 23.♖xh5? c5! is hard to meet) Black had achieved a good position.

But then Kasparov fought back very well. Such positions are especially hard to play against the computer, because it will see every single combination and use it to its advantage. Thus it is particularly impressive that Kasparov held on and even achieved a slight edge with 29.c4!, and after 29...♕g6? 30.♕xg6 fxg6 31.b3 ♘xf2 31.♖e6 he was back on top.

However, the computer played very well to hold the draw, and Garry's opinion after the game was that there was probably no way for him to improve. The computer's drawing resource of 47...♔b6!, 48...♔xb5, and 49...♔b4! to set up the perpetual check was especially impressive. Interestingly, Garry took a lot of time to make his 41st move, and he said afterward that it was here he saw the computer's drawing resource. (Personally, I only saw it after Black made his 46th move.) Garry speculated that the computer saw it after he did, which would not be surprising: grandmasters often see more deeply than computers in these positions, because the critical lines are for a human absolutely straightforward, whereas the computer has to keep expanding its search so that it runs into its horizon at some point.

For all of us rooting for Garry (nearly every human at the event, I think!), this game was a disappointment. Still, I don't see why it should be disheartening. It was simply a well-played game on both sides, which in chess usually means a draw. Indeed, Garry can take some comfort from the fact that he was able to survive playing against the computer in an absolutely wide-open position. Traditionally, of course, playing Black in the last game is a big disadvantage, but after Game 4, I don't see why it should be so bad for Garry.

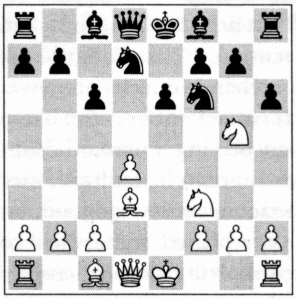
So I am cautiously optimistic about the last game. But I would be remiss if I didn't report some strange noises from Garry in the press conference after the game. He said, 'I am afraid, and not afraid to say why I am afraid. When I see something that is absolutely beyond my understanding, it makes me afraid.' And then he talked about Game 2 again, and how he couldn't understand how the computer could make such human-like moves.

Good grief, won't he stop? Deep Blue's performance in that game is not so difficult to understand! And anyway, who ever said you had to understand everything about your opponent in order to play chess against him, her, or it? Garry, just sit down and play a good game of chess, and stop whining! No doubt it would be nice to know every line of code in your computer opponent, but surely it would be better for you to spend your energy now putting your own house in order to play your best game. I have seen what your best game of chess can do, and it doesn't seem to me that this silicon player can do more than match it occasionally.

May 11, Game 6

Deep Blue-Garry Kasparov New York 1997 (6)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘g5 ♘gf6 6.♗d3 e6 7.♘1f3 h6



8.♘xe6 ♕e7 9.0-0 fxe6 10.♗g6+ ♔d8 11.♗f4 b5 12.a4 ♗b7 13.♖e1 ♘d5 14.♗g3 ♔c8 15.axb5 cxb5 16.♕d3 ♗c6 17.♗f5 exf5 18.♖xe7 ♗xe7 19.c4 1-0

Garry Kasparov has cracked up! There is no other way to put it. Let the popular press rave as much as they want about the computer. Real chess players know the significance of what has happened, and as much as it astonishes me I have to admit it: Kasparov completely self-destructed. His most dangerous opponent in this match turned out to be himself.

I suppose for the sake of formality I should discuss briefly the game itself, although it is not much of a game. To my mind, the most interesting question is what prompted Kasparov's choice of opening. Many people believe that he intended to play the main line of the Caro-Kann, and then simply blundered and played 7...h6? one move too soon (i.e. before 7...♗d6 8.♕e2). But I find that impossible to believe for two reasons. First, it would mean that he committed an atrocious blunder in a position he has analyzed very deeply (for White!) in a very important game. How is such a blunder possible from a player like Kasparov? Second, it would mean that he had intended to play the main line of the Caro-Kann! But why do this? The Caro-Kann leads to fairly open positions, which the computer normally plays well.

I therefore believe something else. I believe that he chose this opening on purpose, telling himself that the computer might not play the position down a piece very well. If the strategy succeeds, then all is well. If it doesn't, then he can tell himself and the world that the sixth game wasn't really chess at all, so that this final game has no significance.

Perhaps I am right, perhaps not. Perhaps there is some other explanation. But there is no question that only some state of absolute psychological destruction can explain this pathetic excuse of a last game. And indeed, the press conference after the game gave ample evidence that his state of mind was disturbed.

[In a telephone conversation from his home in Moscow Garry Kasparov explained after the match what had happened at this crucial moment in the opening of Game 6: 'No, it wasn't exactly a *fingerfehler*. I didn't want to play a real game. I'd chosen the opening too close to the game. If you look at the opening books of any other machine, they put 'no' to knight takes e6. They don't sacrifice the piece. And suddenly, for a moment I lost my... I mean, I wouldn't take that chance again. I wanted to play another opening. Psychologically it was very hard for me, because I felt that my opponent was still fresh and I was losing energy. And I was annoyed because we had permanent conflicts with IBM people all through the match.' (DJtG)]

Kasparov admitted that in his mind, the match was over after the fifth game. He apologized for his performance in the final game, saying that he was ashamed for it. But after this brief show of humility he said that nothing had been proved in this match, that the conditions of the match were unfair, that IBM had possibly tampered with the machine in Game 2, that IBM should enter the machine in legitimate competitions (rather than exhibitions where they are both sponsor and competitor), and that if they did so, he would guarantee that he would 'personally tear it to pieces.'

All those who heard him were astonished. Let's leave aside the allegation of cheating, which I have dealt with before in this report. So nothing has been proved? It is true that an objective analysis of the games shows that Kasparov was playing better than Deep Blue and had more chances to win (especially in Game 4). But so what? A competition is not a scientific experiment to determine with absolute precision who has more of some mysterious essence called 'chess skill'. A competition is a contest, a fight. If the rules are fair, and both sides compete honorably, then the result has significance just for itself. It is a little late in his professional career for Garry Kasparov to be learning this now. If he didn't like the conditions, he shouldn't have agreed to them. At the press conference he complained that this enormous corporation had put all of its resources behind trying to win. Yes, indeed! I am sure he was shocked – shocked! – to find out that IBM had wanted to win this competition. Imagine if, for example, Anand had had the gall to complain that Kasparov was not acting fairly because he actually spent his own money (of which he has more than any other top grandmaster, of course) trying to win the World Championship!

The point about IBM entering Deep Blue into human competition is more interesting. I think many people would like to see it, and I think that if it happened, its results would go down over time. Given the quality of the games it played, I think that the next four or five top-ranked players would have a good chance of beating it. But I am surprised that Kasparov thinks that entering Deep Blue into human competition means that he will have the first crack at tearing it into pieces. I would have thought that we should let Anand, Kramnik, Topalov, Karpov, and others try first.

Maybe Kasparov thinks first crack goes to him because he is the representative of the human race. If so, he has believed his own hype. That hype made for a superb publicity event, from which IBM has greatly profited. Kasparov was also in the position to profit mightily from his partnership with IBM if he had been civil to them throughout the match. Maybe IBM will still want to work with him, but even if they make that decision, I can't believe they will be too happy about it: It's hard to work with someone who acts and reacts so unreasonably. Somewhere along the way, Garry forgot this was a chess match and a business deal, and let the match become personal. The great irony, of course, is that he did so against the one opponent who was not even a person. Lacking a human opponent, Garry found only himself to destroy. For the outside world, this match will have great significance as a milestone in artificial intelligence.

Those of us in the chess world, however, can see its true significance. This was not significant as a triumph for artificial intelligence, because the computer is essentially the same as any other computer, and is not intelligent in the least. It is not significant as a defeat for mankind, because mankind was not defeated. It is significant as Garry Kasparov's first defeat, and a crushing one at that. Kasparov has shown his rivals an Achilles' heel. Deep Blue may not care, but I am quite sure that his human rivals will take notice.

Chess has a rich and fascinating history, which is the envy of many other games. Despite the apparent contradiction with its name, New In Chess has never ignored the best of the old in our game. Issue 1997/5 marked the passing of a largely forgotten master, who had been seen as a genuine world title contender in the 1930s, but whose career had been swept away on the tide of world events.

The life and times of Erich Eliskases (1913-1997)

Michael Ehn

It has been the lot of many great chess masters who never took part in a world championship match that their personalities and achievements gradually faded from public memory until they finally became just a historical footnote. This is precisely what happened to Erich Gottlieb Eliskases (born February 15th, 1913, in Innsbruck, Austria, died February 2nd, 1997, in Cordoba, Argentina). Hardly anybody still remembers that Eliskases was the last top-notch Austrian chess player of the inter-war years and one of the great natural chess talents, or that for a time he was even considered a likely contender for the world title. But that is not the only reason why his life story deserves to be saved from total oblivion – his biography, tightly woven into the fabric of the global political events of the 20th century, raises a number of questions that go far beyond his own personality or the world of chess.

His early chess years read like the beginning of a novel: in his family, nobody was familiar with the game; his father was a tailor, his family came from the Ladin-speaking region of southwestern Tyrol. It was pure chance that brought the 12-year-old boy into contact with the 'game of games', and he immediately took a keen interest in his new-found hobby.

Only one year later, he applied for membership in the Innsbrucker Schachgesellschaft but was refused because of his tender age. However, he found a paternal friend and teacher in Carl P. Wagner, an Innsbruck chess player who recognized his extraordinary talent. At the age of 14, in 1927, Eliskases played his first tournament in the Schlechter Chess Club and immediately shared first prize. One year later, at the age of 15, he took part in the Tyrolean Championship and scored a convincing victory (with 7 points from 8 games!). He had thereby won the right to participate in the tournament for the Austrian Championship of 1929, which happened to be held in his native Innsbruck. The end result was another sensation: Eliskases shared first place with Esra Glass (+5 =3 –1) and thus became the youngest player ever to win the Austrian championship title.

At that time, the Tyrolean was still studying at the Handelsakademie (business school) in Innsbruck – as a student, he is reputed to have been above average, although not excelling in any particular field. Against the resistance of some Austrian officials, the youngster was sent to the Hamburg Chess Olympiad, where he performed quite brilliantly: with a score of 73.3% (+8 =6 –1) he obtained the best result of all Austrian participants, contributing more than his share to the excellent placing of the Austrian team (they finished fourth). After graduating with honours from business school, he moved to Vienna, where he began his studies at the Hochschule für Welthandel, starting with the winter semester 1931/32. However, his passion for chess had already become all-consuming: 'Eli', as his friends called him, joined the Hietzing Chess Club and was immediately challenged to an informal match by local hero GM Ernst Grünfeld, who won the match by a narrow margin. The rivalry between these two players lingered on through the following years; in the end, the scales were clearly tipped in Eliskases' favour. He started working for the *Wiener Schachzeitung*, at that time one of the leading chess publications in the world, finally becoming chief editor in 1936, after the departure of Albert Becker. This work proved to be an excellent school for his own understanding of the game – even such an authority as former world champion Emanuel Lasker once praised the quality and depth of Eliskases' analyses. In addition, he had begun to play postal chess from 1928 on and here, too, he was remarkably successful – for example, he took third place in the Dr. Dyckhoff Memorial Tournament of 1932, a kind of unofficial world championship for postal chess.

His great breakthrough came in 1932, when the Linzer Schachverein celebrated its 25th anniversary by organizing a ten-game match between Austria's top player of the time, GM Rudolf Spielmann, and the young Tyrolean. After a dramatic fight, Erich Eliskases took the upper hand with a score of +3 –2 =5 and could now lay claim to the unofficial title of 'Österreichischer Vorkämpfer' (i.e. Austria's foremost player), even though Spielmann later declared that his psychological approach to the match had been faulty since he had underestimated his young opponent. Two further matches between the two players followed, now for the official title of Austrian top player: in 1936, Eliskases won with the score of +2 –1 =7, doing even better in the return-match of 1937 (+2 –0 =8).

Eliskases' leading position in Austrian chess was now undisputed. The Tyrolean's style had always been characterized by extreme perseverance and circumspection. He retained his composure even in the most difficult positions, playing with uncompromising practicality and without any flourishes. As Hans Kmoch once remarked, 'neither far-fetched innovations, nor sacrificial dreams, nor headstands' were to be found in his games. In the thirties, he played in many strong tournaments; those were the years of his rise to fame in the international chess community. As an example, let us just mention his consistently good showing at Chess Olympiads – e.g. Warsaw 1935, where he scored points

Photo taken on his 70th birthday in 1983.
After the war, Eliskases was no longer a world championship contender, but 'just' a regular grandmaster.

for Austria practically single-handedly – and the first prize he shared with Lajos Steiner in the Trebitsch Memorial Tournament of 1936. In the 1937 elite tournament at Semmering, although failing to reach the 50% mark, he had the personal satisfaction of not only having defeated the final winner, the then 21-year-old Paul Keres, but also having outplayed former world champion Jose Raul Capablanca in the Cuban's own field of excellence, the endgame. In the same year, he was Alexander Alekhine's second in the Russian's return-match with Max Euwe. Overjoyed at the recovery of his title, Alekhine presented his young second with a gold cigarette case. (After winning against Efim Bogoljubow in 1934, on the other hand, he is reported to have treated his second, Hans Kmoch, to a small goulash!)

Then there followed Eliskases' two most successful years, coinciding with Austria's incorporation into the Third Reich: 1938 and 1939. About this time, Eliskases seems to have realized that his style of play was too cautious to strive after greater laurels, and he successfully tried a more aggressive approach: at Noordwijk in 1938 he achieved his biggest success by taking first prize (+6 –0 =3), ahead of Paul Keres and Max Euwe. The ending from his game against Paul Keres made its way around the world. There followed an incredible run of successes: Eliskases won six strong tournaments, each time by a clear margin: the German Championship at Bad Oeynhausen in 1938, Krefeld 1938, Bad Oeynhausen 1939 (the German Championship again), Bad Elster 1939, Bad Harzburg 1939 and the Vienna 'Wertungsturnier' of 1939. In the same year, he played a match against the strongest player of the 'Deutsches Reich', the Russian Efim Bogoljubow, winning with a score of +6 =11 –3. He was now considered a likely candidate for a world championship match and was fervently supported by the 'Grossdeutscher Schachbund' (GSB), submitting to its ideology without reservations. It obviously flattered him to play the part of the 'upright German', who was destined to win international recognition for the 'German style of fighting chess', as well as dedicating himself to the 'purity' of the German language (a goal he pursued until the end of his life, as witnessed by his 1962 translation of Roman Toran's biography of David Bronstein).

In spite of his rapid climb to the top, he was always described as a polite and pleasant person without the slightest trace of superciliousness. The GSB had high hopes for him. Even world champion Alexander Alekhine, towards the end of his anti-Semitic tract 'Jewish and Aryan Chess' (1941), referred to Eliskases as his most worthy successor:

'On the contrary, it would be of much greater service to the world chess community if, for example, Keres or Eliskases became the title holder. And if in fact the one or the other should prove to be a better player, I would acknowledge this quite ungrudgingly. But who is the better of the two? To be sure, Keres has a truly attractive 'Morphy style', but Eliskases' chess is much more comprehensive, evoking the notion of a truly universal style of chess. Can it really be considered mere chance that Eliskases beat the Estonian grandmaster not only at Semmering in 1937 but also in Buenos Aires?'

One cannot simply dismiss these statements as an attempt by Alekhine to please the Nazi regime, since several documents prove that as early as 1939 the plan of staging a world championship match between Alekhine and Eliskases in 1941 was being entertained by German chess circles.

Then history intervened and played havoc with Eliskases' ambitions: it was precisely during the Chess Olympiad of 1939 in Buenos Aires, where two Austrians played in the German team – Eliskases (on top board) and Albert Becker – that the Second World War broke out. (The German team won despite a number of obstacles; some countries refused to play against 'Grossdeutschland', and those meetings had to be scored as a 2-2 draw without play.) Most players, Eliskases and Becker among them, could not or would not return to their countries, and this put an end to the Tyrolean's promising career, at least for the time being, since the following years were dominated by the need to survive in a new environment. He eked out a living by giving simultaneous exhibitions and playing in tournaments. In 1941, after the tournament of Sao Paulo, he stayed in Brazil, working as a bridge teacher. Threatened by internment and expulsion (since Brazil had broken off all official contacts with Germany), he narrowly escaped that fate with the help of some Brazilian chess enthusiasts, who hired him as their chess teacher on a regular basis. In 1947, he found a steady job at a department store of the German firm Renner in Porto Alegre and also became a chess teacher at the firm's chess club. In 1951, he returned to Argentina and settled down in Cordoba, where he met 'a nice girl', as he himself expressed it, and married her on May 17th, 1954. He was granted the GM title not in 1950, but in 1952, just like Bogoljubow, whose political activities for the Nazi regime had been under scrutiny for some time. But what was FIDE's reason for procrastination in the case of Eliskases? No accusations had ever been raised against him, so perhaps he had simply been forgotten?

After the war, the chess career of Eliskases, who had become an Argentine citizen, was revived, but he was now considered just a 'regular' grandmaster. He played in many South American tournaments until the seventies, with fair to middling success, even winning the Zonal Tournament at Mar del Plata in 1951 and finishing in 10th place in the Interzonal Tournament at Saltsjöbaden in 1952 (on the way to that tournament, he revisited his native Austria for the first time since the war). The best result of his 'South American period' was certainly his victory in Mar del Plata in 1948 (+9 =8 –0), ahead of world class players such as Gideon Stahlberg, Miguel Najdorf and Laszlo Szabo. For example, who had ever seen the great Najdorf go down in just 24 moves?

Erich Eliskases is probably the only chess player to have represented three different countries at Chess Olympiads: Austria (1930-35), Germany (1939) and Argentina (1952, 1958, 1960 and 1964); besides, he is the only Austrian to have beaten three world champions (Max Euwe, Jose Raul Capablanca and Bobby Fischer!

In 1976, he returned to his native Tyrol with his wife and son, intending to settle there. He also played chess – even for the Austrian national team! – but after about half a year the couple had to return to Cordoba; the old ties had been permanently severed, and besides his wife suffered in the rough climate of the Alps. The last years of his life were spent in Cordoba, overshadowed by illness and depression. His chess heritage, consisting of extensive comments to his own games, the publication of which had become an important goal in his final years, was left to a Viennese chess friend.

Was Eliskases a 'Victim of the Second World War', as the Austrian chess magazine *Schach Aktiv* claimed in a headline in its March 1983 issue, or had he profited from and tacitly condoned the Nazi regime? What was his own part, and what part did chess in general play during the Nazi years? These are difficult but pressing questions, as yet unanswered with regard to chess in Germany and Austria (as opposed to the topic of music and literature during the Nazi regime); as a matter of fact, these questions have yet to be seriously examined.

NOTES BY

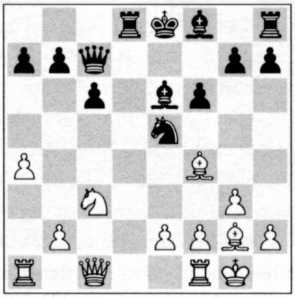
Erich Eliskases

SL 4.5
Erich Eliskases
Jose Capablanca
Semmering/Baden 1937

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.♘e5

Going by the last few games, this set-up offers more prospects than the equally common 6.e3

6...♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♕c7 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♗f4 ♘fd7 11.♗g2 f6 12.0-0 ♖d8 13.♕c1 ♗e6 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5



15.a5!

Strangely enough, this move has been criticized a lot after it was played in Alekhine-Euwe, in which this position was seen for the first time. There, however, the mistake came two moves later, as White, instead of covering the attacked pawn with ♗d2, went for unclear attacking chances.

Worth trying is 15.♘e4 at once, followed by, e.g., 15...♗b4 16.♗d2 ♕a5 17.♗xb4 ♕xb4 18.♕f4!, as in the well-known game Levenfish-Flohr, Moscow 1936, in which White managed to prove an opening advantage and won the endgame.

15...a6

Otherwise the pawn advances to a6, breaking up Black's defences.

16.♘e4 ♗b4 17.♗d2! ♕e7

The game Fine-Capablanca from the same tournament saw 17...♗xd2! 18.♘xd2 0-0 19.♕c3 ♕d6 20.♘e4 ♕d4 21.♘c5 ♗c8 22.♕b3+ ♕c4, after which a draw was agreed. One wonders if White would not have done better to carry on.

18.♗xb4 ♕xb4 19.♕c5! ♕xc5 20.♘xc5 ♗c8 21.♖fd1 ♔e7

This is the end of the opening phase of the game. White keeps the enemy queenside at bay, and is a pawn up on the other wing. Black's only compensation is his better king position which, as we will see, is not enough.

22.b3 ♘f7

After 22...♘d7, 23.♘e4 is difficult to deal with, and I would prefer 22...♖d6.

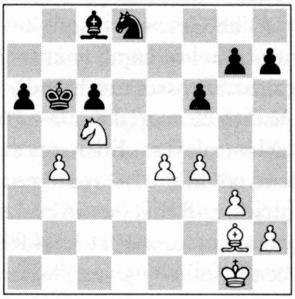
23.e4!

Keeping the active-looking knight away from d4 (23...♘d6 24.♗f1!), while at the same time advancing the valuable pawn.

23...♖d6 24.♖xd6 ♔xd6 25.b4 ♔c7 26.♖d1 ♖d8 27.♖xd8 ♘xd8 28.f4 b6

This doesn't remove the pressure; on the contrary, it makes the defence more difficult. I had expected 28...♘e6 29.♔f2 ♘d4, etc.

29.axb6+ ♔xb6



30.♗f1!

An invaluable move, which not only prevents a6-a5 in view of ♘a4, winning a pawn, but also allows White to play ♗c4 in order to try and eliminate the black bishop.

30...♘e6!

A double-edged reply. It's true that after both 31.♘xe6 ♗xe6, followed by 32...a5 or ♗c8 and c5, and 31.♗xa6 ♘xc5 (31...♗xa6? 32.♘xe6 ♔b5 33.♘d4+) 32.♗xc8 ♘xe4 33.♗f5 ♘d6 34.♗xh7 ♔b5 Black is better, but there is another possibility which Reshevsky pointed out to me later, viz. 31.♗h3!. The pawn ending after the double piece swap would then win as follows: 31...♘xc5 32.bxc5+ ♔b7 33.♗xc8+ ♔xc8 34.♔f2 ♔d7! 35.f5! (35.♔e3 ♔e6, followed by 36...f5, and Black equalizes) 35...♔c7 36.g4 h6 37.h4 a5 38.♔e3 ♔b7 39.♔d4 ♔a6 40.♔c4 a4 (or 40...♔a7 41.♔b3 ♔b7 42.♔a4 ♔a6 43.e5 fxe5 44.g5 hxg5 45.hxg5 e4 46.f6 gxf6 47.gxf6 e3 48.f7 e2 49.f8♕ e1♕ 50.♕a8+ mate) 41.♔b4 a3 42.♔xa3 ♔b5 43.e5 fxe5 (if 43...♔xc5, then

44.e6 ♔d6 45.♔b4 c5+ 46.♔b5, and wins) 44.g5 hxg5 45.hxg5 e4 46.♔b3 ♔xc5 47.f6 gxf6 48.g6, and the pawn queens.

But Black sacrifices at least a piece with 31...a5! 32.♗xe6 ♗xe6 33.♘xe6 axb4, and has a draw after 34.♘d4 ♔c5 35.♘b3+ ♔c4 36.♘a5+ ♔b5 37.♘b3 ♔c4 38.♘a5+; 38.♘d2+ ♔d3 is dangerous for White.

Therefore, the bad-looking knight jump (30...♘e6) is a very sly defensive move.

31.♘a4+ ♔c7 32.♔f2 g5

Capablanca thought for 60 minutes here, probably because he couldn't find a satisfactory defence. Afterwards he opined that the pawn sac 32...c5 should have yielded him a draw (White replies 33.f5). But this is not easy to prove.

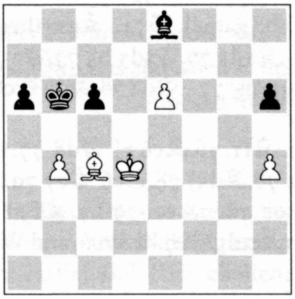
33.♔e3 gxf4+ 34.gxf4 ♘g7 35.♘c5! ♘e6

Black is prepared to sacrifice a pawn to free himself. 35...♔b6 is followed by 36.♗c4 and in any case by f5 and ♗e6.

36.♘xe6+ ♗xe6 37.♔d4!

Not 37.♗xa6? in view of 37...♔b6 and 38...c5.

37...♔b6 38.♗c4! ♗g4 39.e5 fxe5+ 40.fxe5 h6 41.h4 ♗h5 42.e6 ♗e8



At this point the game was adjourned. After 43.e7, followed by ♔d4-e5-f6 and ♗f7, the win was easy. But I had sealed 43.♗d3, as I believed the liquidation ♗h7-g8-f7 was decisive. A mistake with serious consequences!

43.♗d3 Better was 43.e7! intending to follow up with ♔e5-f6, ♗f7 and wins.

43...♔c7 44.♔c5 44.♔e5 was more forcing.

44...♗h5 45.♗h7? A mistake which throws away the win. After the natural 45.♗xa6 the position was still a fairly easy victory.

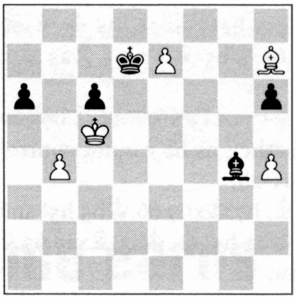
45...♗g4!

Wrong was 45...♗e8 in view of 46.♗g8, followed by 47.♗f7; the same goes for 45...♗f3? in view of 46.♗g6.

46.e7

A difficult decision, but 46.♗g8 runs into 46...♗f3 47.♗f7 ♗d5!, and White makes no progress.

46...♔d7



47.♗e4!

From now on, White finds the correct moves, but it is too late. If 47.♗d3, then 47...♗f3! 48.♗xa6 ♔xe7 49.♗b7 ♔d7 50.b5 cxb5 51.♗xf3 ♔e7, and Black will find it easy to draw, as the white bishop does not control the outside pawn's final square.

47...♔xe7 48.♗xc6 ♗e2 49.♗b7 ♔d7 50.♔b6 ♔d6 51.♗xa6 ♗f3 52.♔a5!

52.b5 is followed by 52...♗e2 and 53...♗b5, when Black has a well-known drawn position.

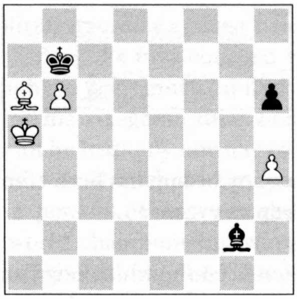
52...♗c6 53.♗b5 ♗f3 54.♗d3 ♗c6 55.♗c2 ♔c7 56.♗a4!

Now the pawn can advance. Black cannot swap the bishop, as he is bound to lose the pawn ending: 56...♗xa4 57.♔xa4 h5 58.♔a5, or 57...♔b6 58.h5!.

56...♗f3 57.b5 ♔b7 58.b6 ♗e2 59.♗c2!

Threatening 60.♗e4, pushing away the king. Offering to swap with 59.♗b5 would now backfire because of 59...♗b5 60.♔b5 h5!.

59...♗f3 60.♗d3 ♗g2 61.♗a6+



61...♔c6?

The endgame is of great theoretical significance, and a rare gem.

The fact that Capablanca makes a mistake shows how difficult the defence is. It is excusable, though, because no one likes his king to be shouldered out of the way. But 61...♔b8! would nevertheless have kept his drawing chances alive, e.g. 62.♔b5 ♗f1+ 63.♔a5 ♗g2 64.♔b4 ♗b7, and now:

A) 65.♗c4 ♗f3 66.♔c5 ♔b7!, and White gets no further, as he cannot control the long diagonal h1-a8;

B) 65.♗xb7 ♔xb7 66.♔b5 h5! and draws;

C) 65.♔b5 h5! 66.♔a5 ♗xa6 67.♔xa6 ♔a8 with a draw.

The following sequence is quite instructive. White can convert his slight advantage if he finds the correct bishop moves.

62.♗c8 ♗f1

Preventing the devastating 63.♔a6.

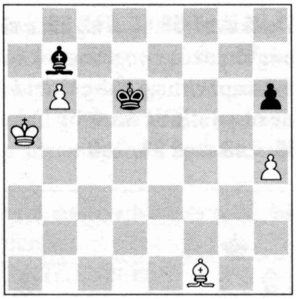
63.♗g4 ♗d3

Black had to either give up the h1-a8 diagonal or square a6, ending up losing in both cases:

A) 63...♗g2 64.♔a6 ♔c5 65.♔a7 ♔b5 66.♗c8 ♔a5 67.♗b7 ♗f1 68.♗f3 ♗a6 69.♗e2 ♗c8 70.h5 ♔b4 71.♗a6 winning;

B) 63...♔b7 64.♗f3+ ♔b8 65.♔b4 ♗a6 66.♔c5 ♗b7 67.♗xb7 ♔xb7 68.h5, or 66...♗c8 67.♔d6 ♗b7 68.♗xb7 ♔xb7 69.♔e6 (White has gained a tempo for the pawn ending).

64.♗f3+ ♔d6 65.♗b7 ♗e2 66.♗a6 ♗f3 67.♗f1 ♗b7



68.♗h3!

Now the enemy bishop has been eliminated, as it has to keep an eye on a6.

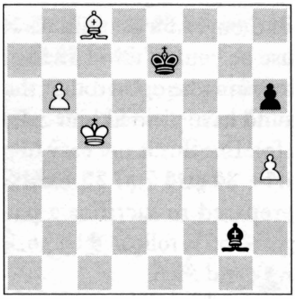
68...♔e7

Black cannot keep the white king from coming to c5: 68...♔c5 69.♗g4 ♔c4 (♔c6 and ♔d5 are impossible in view of ♗f3, while 69...♔d6 is met by 70.♔b3, as in the game) 70.♗e2+ ♔c5 71.♗a6 ♗f3 (71...♔c6 72.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 73.h5!. This is a recurrent motif) 72.♗c8, and now Black cannot parry 73.♔a6, as his king is too far away: 72...♗e2? 73.b7.

69.♔b5 ♔d6 70.♗g4 ♔e7 71.♔c5 ♗g2

After any king move White plays 72.♔d6. The bishop is allowed to play now, as a6 is no longer under threat.

72.♗c8



72...♔d8

Giving his opponent a chance to shorten the win. The most stubborn response was 72...♗f3 73.♗a6 ♔d7 74.♗c4 ♔c8 75.♗d5!, etc. (compare with the game). If 74...♗g2, then 75.♗d5:

A) 75...♗xd5 76.♔xd5 h5 77.♔c5!, and the b-pawn queens: 77...♔d8 78.♔d6 ♔c8 79.♔c6, etc.;

B) 75...♗f1 76.♗e6+! ♔d8 77.♔d6 ♗a6 (77...♗g2 78.♗d5) 78.♔c6 ♔e7 79.♗c4 ♗c8 80.♔c7, or 78...♗e2 79.b7 ♗f3+ 80.♗d5 ♗xd5+ 81.♔xd5 ♔c7 82.♔e6, and White wins.

73.♗a6

With 73.♗e6! White could have saved himself a few moves.

73...♗f3 74.♔d6 ♗g2 75.♗c4 ♔c8 76.♗d5 ♗f1

Black must not swap, as his king will be just one move late arriving on f8: 76...♗xd5 77.♔xd5 ♔b7 78.♔e6 ♔xb6 79.♔f6 ♔c7 80.♔g6 ♔d7 81.♔xh6 ♔e7 82.♔g7.

77.♔e6 ♗e2 78.♔f6 ♔d7 79.♔g6 h5 80.♔g5 ♔d6 81.♗f7 ♔c6 82.♗xh5

At this point the game was adjourned. Later, Capablanca resigned without resuming play. A possible ending would be: 82...♗c4 83.♗e8+ ♔xb6 84.h5 ♔c7 85.h6 ♗g8 (85...♗d3 86.♗g6) 86.♔g6 ♔d8 87.♗f7.

A valuable victory. A pity that the overall picture is marred by a few errors.

1997 saw the biggest shake-up of the world chess championship in half a century. To the delight of some, the disgust of many, and the shock of just about all, FIDE decided to run the world championship on a knockout basis. 64 players converged on the Dutch town of Groningen, to fight out the new championship, complete with allegro finishes, and rapidplay and blitz playoffs. In the end, while Botvinnik rotated in his grave, a few blitz games decided who was to meet Anatoly Karpov in the final in Lausanne.

Expensive blitz game earns Anand ticket to Lausanne

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

The first FIDE knock-out world championship was launched in Groningen with a record participation of close to one hundred grandmasters. FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov called December 8, 1997, a historic day for the world of chess. After 110 years the traditional world championship was abolished in one fell swoop and replaced by a spectacular system that was supposed to cater better to the tastes of modern times.

Ironically, Ilyumzhinov spoke these words in exactly the same building complex where four years earlier Bob Rice challenged FIDE at the start of the first (and last) PCA Qualifier. Even more ironically, and probably unintentionally, the organizers had booked a group of singers for the entertainment part who performed exactly the same set as four years ago! At that time PCA advocate Garry Kasparov said that in the end the players would go where the money was. True to his words, they duly did, with only a few exceptions. They did so again this time in even bigger numbers, lured by the five million dollar prize-fund that Ilyumzhinov had conjured up from his own pockets. The players were happy, and could you blame them? Even the first-round losers got the handsome amount of close to five thousand dollars. Moreover, a majority of the participants spoke in praise of the new format, which was far less time-consuming than the old system. Yet, a few complaints persisted, notably the far-reaching privileges granted to Anatoly Karpov and the subsequent disadvantage of his challenger. Immediately after he had crowned a nerve-racking and exhausting three-week long survival test in the most expensive blitz game ever against Michael Adams, Vishy Anand's first concern was to arrange a flight to Lausanne and find a hotel to prepare for his six-game final against Karpov. After all he had only one day to get there. And there was this short but painful list of missing persons. What was the use of a 1997/98 world championship when the first two players on the rating list, Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik, decided to stay on the sidelines?

Some stories begin at the beginning, others begin at the end. This story of the Groningen leg of the FIDE knock-out world championship begins at the very end. In a tropically hot playing room in the Martini business centre two chess players are playing a blitz game with some five hundred spectators watching with bated breath in a deafening silence. Not even the ticking of the chess clock can be heard, as it is a digital timer. There's only the clicking of the pieces that are being moved cautiously and the lever of the clock that is pushed. An occasional suppressed cough earns a scowl from the chief arbiter or one of his deputies. This game is too dramatic to tolerate any interference.

The players are Viswanathan Anand and Michael Adams. They are the last survivors of a merciless elimination battle that started three weeks ago.

Some one hundred players have seen their hopes go up in smoke. Now one of these two has to bite the dust. So far, it has been a level match. The first four regular games were drawn and so were the subsequent four rapid games. There's a feeling that Anand has the initiative, but Adams reminded everyone that he, too, is someone to be reckoned with, particularly in the second and third rapid games.

A stifling heat pervades the room. Temperatures are soaring to heights that even Anand may find a bit too tropical. In the audience Tara, Adams' girl friend, and Aruna, Anand's wife, have their eyes locked on their loved ones to detect any signs that may betray what is going on at the board. The tension has gone up now that the players have entered the sudden death phase. Any decision now will signal the end of the match.

Anand is playing the white pieces in the sudden-death game. His advantage is compensated for by Adams's extra minute, six as opposed to five. It doesn't do the Englishman much good, and 15 moves into the game the time-advantage has already vanished. The moves come at regular intervals but seem slow, a feeling that underscores the unbearable nervous war that is raging. Understandably so. There's an amount of money at stake that is unprecedented for a blitz game. The difference between winning and losing is at least a whopping three hundred thousand dollars. The winner gets about twice as much as the loser and earns the right to play the six-game match for the FIDE world title in Lausanne against Anatoly Karpov for double the stakes.

Anand appeared from the opening with a space advantage, but Adams rolled with the punches and gradually took over the initiative. But his plus was also short-lived. Anand straightens his back and profits from a few insecure moves. He's at the helm again and the spectators wonder whether Adams can fight back once more, or if he will gradually be pushed to the edge of the precipice. As the players enter the final minutes the latter proves to be the case. Adams is fighting with his back against the wall and there is no escape. As he is about to resign, a wry smile crosses his face before he extends his hand to congratulate his opponent. The silence is broken by applause, screams of relief and support for Anand and the general bustle of dozens of people rushing forward to congratulate the winner. Adams quickly disappears, badly in need of a private moment to return to reality.

When he turns up for the press conference ten minutes later he, too, receives a thunderous ovation and tactful words of consolation by Anand, who acknowledges that the outcome might just as well have been the other way round.

Still engrossed by the spectacular show they have just witnessed, the spectators drink in the words of the players as they give their opinion on the knock-out format. Both see certain drawbacks but more than that they welcome the changes that seem to have ended the long drawn-out championships of yesteryear. Adams, too, stresses that the endless trail of zonals, interzonals and candidates' matches was not too attractive for the majority of players.

Musing about the days that lie ahead of him, Anand remembers the remark of a friend who told him before the event that Karpov was just waiting in Lausanne to open the lid of the coffin that would be sent to him to see who his opponent was. In all honesty, Anand admits that he does not feel in need of a coffin now, even though he quickly adds that most probably he will feel incredibly tired soon.

MARK REINTJES

The most expensive blitz game in history – over $300,000 separated the winner's and loser's prizes.

As I look around me, flashes of the past weeks shoot through my head. Never once did we see such a crowd. Except for the most dramatic tie-breaks, the spectator section has only been marginally filled. I see the familiar FIDE faces, who after each round eagerly handed out the money that many had feared would not be there. Right at the beginning of the championship any doubts about the existence of the prize-money were taken away. Players who had arrived in Groningen without any pocket-money were even offered the opportunity to ask for an advance payment. Doubts about the origins of the money, although few players asked, were more difficult to allay. In the tournament brochure the Russian gas and oil company Halzan was mentioned as the sole sponsor, but when quizzed by Dutch television, Ilyumzhinov admitted that all money came from his private fund for social projects.

What motivates the Kalmykian president to invest five million dollars into an undertaking that brings him nothing in return remains a bit of a mystery. Ilyumzhinov has repeatedly stated that his chess presidency helps to open doors that otherwise might remain closed and therefore indirectly boosts the economy of his country. A reasonable explanation, but this same effect might be achieved at a much lower prize, particularly now that he has announced his financial support for this biennial championship for the next twenty years.

The chess players did not seem to worry too much. Just being there for round one earned them six thousand dollars, and every round they survived doubled their earnings. Even with the twenty per cent FIDE tax that all prize-money was subjected to, most of them made considerably more money than they were used to. Perhaps this circumstance also mollified them when they were asked their opinion on the knock-out format. They might add some small points of criticism, but generally speaking reactions were highly favourable. Did the set-up have a detrimental effect on the quality of the games? That's hard to say. The Fischer clock avoided the worst bloomers and even in the hypertense final between Adams and Anand the number of outright blunders and oversights was gratifyingly low. On the other hand, the number of great games was also limited. Small wonder. What player feels tempted to throw caution to the wind in a moment of artistic inspiration when he knows that a more level-headed approach may be far more profitable? As a consequence, the number of lacklustre draws was also predictably high.

And was it a suitable qualifier? The results of the first week must have come as quite a shock to the FIDE management, when both Vasily Ivanchuk and Veselin Topalov, the number two and three seeds, tripped up in their very first encounter. Ivanchuk went under against Yasser Seirawan, who remembered that his opponent had told him in Reykjavik 1991 what slightly dubious continuation he normally played against a certain line. Topalov achieved nothing in his game as White against Jeroen Piket and was trounced in his black game. Incredulously shaking his head, the Bulgarian left the playing hall, commenting in disbelief that he had played 'very unprofessionally'. With two top seeds eliminated and Kasparov and Kramnik not competing, the propagators of the system suddenly faced a grim prospect. Were they going to end up with a final of two nobodies? No, they weren't. The remaining names you might expect to get going once the going got tough didn't disappoint them. Inevitably, a fair number of pre-tournament favourites fell by the wayside, but no one complained about the Anand-Adams final, or rather semi-final. Anand was the highest rated participant, while Adams could be called a knock-out specialist by right of his wins in Brussels and Tilburg in 1992.

Short had dyed his hair, hoping to frighten his opponents.

At the final press conference Anand stated unambiguously that to his mind Adams and he had shown the best chess in Groningen, and it is true that they had plenty to show for their work. Anand eliminated Predrag Nikolic, Alexander Khalifman, Zoltan Almasi, Alexey Shirov and Boris Gelfand. The only scary moment he experienced was in his second game against Alexander Khalifman, when Anand, as White, ended up in a lost position. Khalifman had come to Groningen with high hopes. His preparation had been excellent and he felt in great shape. However, he lost a good deal of his physical stamina when during the first two days he had to change hotels twice. Anand was already considering his travel schedule when suddenly Khalifman became hesitant about his chances to win the position that had seemed winning for such a long time – so hesitant, in fact, that he ultimately proposed a draw in a position that was still winning.

Anand did not give him a second chance and convincingly claimed the tie-break. Khalifman felt robbed by the organizers, who had not helped him properly in his search for a decent hotel. Anand had no such complaints, but he, too, had to find out that staying in a hotel that is filled with participants in a knock-out tournament has certain drawbacks. More often than not the receptionist welcomed him after his morning walks with the question: 'Are you leaving today?'

Adams also qualified in a rather straightforward manner, although he needed a few tie-breaks. Giorgadze and Tiviakov were eliminated in classical games, but his matches against Peter Svidler and Loek van Wely went to overtime. The toughest tie-break he played was the addendum to his prestigious encounter with fellow-countryman Nigel Short.

Up to that point, Short had shown himself a strong candidate for the semi-final and also for Lausanne. Short scored heavily and played inspired chess. Yet, in all probability his qualification would not have been welcomed by too many spectators. Given his role in the enduring schism in the chess world, his candid admission that he played this FIDE event solely for the money was not greatly appreciated. For the occasion Short had dyed his hair, not in an attempt to make an anonymous appearance, but hoping, as he said, to frighten his opponents. Not unsuccessfully. He entered on a winning streak and both against Beliavsky and Adams he fought back impressively to win the second games after he had lost the first ones. On the other hand, his uncompromising approach cost a lot of energy, as became apparent in his tie-break against Adams, where the latter's pressure finally carried the day in the sudden-death blitz game.

The match between Adams and Short was only one of many national clashes that, to the players' chagrin, often appeared in the schedule. Quite unfortunately the two last remaining Dutch players, Piket and Van Wely, were pitted against each other in Round 3. Van Wely won in the tie-break and went on to please the home crowd by eliminating Kiril Georgiev in the next round. The end of 'King Loek's' adventure came in Round 5, when he ran into Michael Adams.

Equally painful was the Armenian encounter between Rafael Vaganian and Vladimir Akopian. In an endless string of games they refused to beat each other until finally Akopian qualified for the next round. Vadim Zviagintsev, one of the most creative players of the first week, also fell victim to a compatriot, Alexander Dreev. This was in Round 4, after Zviagintsev had knocked out a remarkable trio of players. Remarkable, that is, in the light of the American insinuations following the Russian victory in the world championship for teams in Lucerne. First Zviagintsev beat American champion Joel Benjamin, then he beat one of the topscorers of the American team, Gregory Kaidanov, and finally he also got the better of Yasser Seirawan in the tie-break, after the American had allowed a draw by repetition in a much better position in the second normal game. After his loss against Dreev (again in the tie-break) Zviagintsev shrugged his shoulders and excused himself with the words: 'Well, no American, was he?'

Most of the players who were eliminated went home as quickly as possible, except for a handful of players who were tempted to participate in the open tournament. The most notable player who didn't leave was Vasily Ivanchuk, whose frequent visits to the press room were highly appreciated. The first day after he had been eliminated he played a gripping blitz marathon against Judit Polgar. Altogether they played some forty games, with the score approximately level. A couple of days later he enquired if there were any draughts tournaments going on in Groningen, as he would gladly take part. Much to his delight the local participant in the knockout world championship, Erik Hoeksema, happened to be quite a strong draughts player and willing to play a couple of games. Their first match brought Ivanchuk five losses. One day later he was back, saying that he had prepared a bit for a second match, and indeed this time he managed to win two out of five games.

Immediately after he had beaten Adams, Anand was faced by a new problem, one of a logistical nature. How could he get to Lausanne as quickly as possible? Quite amazingly, the organizers of a tournament with a five million dollar prize-fund had not been able to foresee that it might be quite convenient for the survivor of the Groningen leg to be supplied with tickets to the next destination and a booked room in an adequate hotel there. To paraphrase an old Larry Christiansen quote, Anand had climbed Mount Everest, hiked to the South Pole and swum the Amazon, and now he had to solve the riddle of the Sphinx in order to get a chance to slay the Dragon.

As this issue opened with the Lausanne report, you know that Anand did manage to get to Lausanne but that he failed to slay the Dragon. For a while he seemed poised to accomplish his last mission too, but in the end what many had expected and feared, happened. On our way to the opening ceremony in Groningen I discussed the odds of the top- seeds Anand, Ivanchuk and Topalov to reach the final with Hans Ree. Hans quickly calculated that the chances of any of these three reaching the final were less than 25 per cent. So, in hindsight you might say that the mere fact that Anand got to Lausanne was against all the odds, and that his qualification was a great show of strength. Unfortunately, I forgot to ask Hans about Anand's chances, if he qualified, of beating Karpov as well.

New In Chess has always followed the policy of letting players have their say, however controversial or outspoken they may be. Over the years, this has made for some memorable contributions, not all of which make comfortable reading, but none of which can be faulted for their entertainment value. The next piece is one such. Valery Salov has long since withdrawn from the chess world, but re-reading the following pages, one cannot help but think what a loss he was, as both player and polemicist.

Going Dutch, Monicagate and More

Valery Salov

It must have been quite a while ago that Valery Salov lost five games in a tournament. An obvious explanation for his poor result may be his lack of practice. Not counting the two games he played in the FIDE knock-out championship, he hadn't competed in a tournament for seven months. Salov feels isolated in the chess world and has his own explanation of the why and how. When we asked him to annotate a game from Wijk aan Zee he inquired if he could write an extensive introduction to this game, explaining his position. Would we publish this introduction *in toto* if he wrote it? As we've always appreciated Salov's analytical contributions to our magazine we answered affirmatively, although we realized that this introduction might include an fierce attack on those who he sees as his enemies.

In all honesty, the piece of prose he came up with surpassed our expectations both positively and negatively. Still, we decided not to make any changes and stick to our promise. Let the readers judge for themselves and draw their own conclusions from Salov's reasonings and observations. Here are the uncensored notes to the game Shirov-Salov by Valery Salov.

The 60th Hoogovens Tournament was a memorable event for me for several reasons. First of all I learnt the true meaning of the expression 'going Dutch'. The explanation had already been given in one of the 1993 New In Chess issues, but I've managed to find my own, completely new interpretation. Having spent all the tournament at the bottom half of the cross-table with a negative balance of points amongst almost exclusively Dutch players I used to see the friendly faces of my fellow-sufferers and feel their warm breath in my neck even at the moments of utmost tension, when I was trying to leave them in the 'cellar'. All in vain, I simply could not do it. The emotional ties connecting me with Paul, Friso and Loek outgrew trivial friendship: they converted into a real brotherhood. Jeroen with his 50% looked like an upstart, Jan on +2 like an abominable renegade. If I add to this that I didn't manage to win a single game against the Dutch players and that my negative result was partly due to losses against Timman and Van der Sterren, you will understand what 'going Dutch' really means.

So much about the tournament itself. As I did not participate in the fight for first prize (to put it mildly) it was necessary to find some distraction. So the main tonic of my stay in Wijk aan Zee became 'Monica Lewinsky's true story'. This soap opera made such a deep and last-

MARK REINTJES

Polemicist *par excellence* – Valery Salov, flanked by Shirov and Kramnik.

ing impression on me that I can't help sharing some of the melancholic thoughts it aroused in me with New In Chess readers.

To start with, there was this feeling of *déjà vu*. Seven years ago I came to Wijk aan Zee for the first time, when the start of the tournament coincided with the beginning of the Gulf War. This time again the bombing of Iraq was not only a discernible background to the story, but probably also its driving force and its *raison d'être*. However, leaving aside the political and military implications of the case, I'd like to focus on it from a somewhat different angle, which might make it also topical for chess players and help to explain my personal stand on a number of chess related issues.

The scandal broke as a bolt from the blue on Tuesday, January 20th. It was started by *The Washington Post*, although *Newsweek* boasts of having had all the material ready for publication as early as Saturday the 17th. Very soon Clinton was the target of a fierce and almost unanimous attack from the so-called democratic press. Special prosecutor Kenneth Starr and his team decided to make a new dive into the president's sex life, and suddenly Clinton was confronted with a real danger of charges of perjury, obstruction of justice and witness tampering.

The whole world (or at least the American media) seemed to go topsy-turvy before the possibility of proof that the U.S. President might possible lie under oath. 'Impeachment' was on everybody's lips.

Now the big question comes: Why, for God's sake, was Clinton expected to tell the truth? Is this not universally considered a sign of bad education, perversity, something socially dangerous and therefore intolerable? As one of my all-time favourites Oscar Wilde put it: 'If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.'

Wilde did not specify what might follow but we know only too well that such a person is at best considered a freak of nature. Normally he is inexorably annihilated by society in one way or another. History provides plenty of edifying examples: truth-tellers are either poisoned (Socrates) or crucified (Jesus of Nazareth), strangled and burnt afterwards (Savonarola), decapitated (Thomas More), excommunicated, banned, anathematized, cursed and execrated (Baruch Spinoza).

By the twentieth century truth-telling has apparently become an especially appalling and loathsome crime, and poisoning has gradually established itself as the most reliable weapon against it. Not everybody is given this exceptional treatment of course – it is only reserved for the very best of the truth-tellers, people whose talent infuses their testimony with the poetic strength of the Sermon on the Mount. The lesser ones are normally just slandered in the press, declared insane and left to die quietly in the most abject misery. The fates of the truth-tellers vary wildly, but I've never heard of anyone of them becoming President of the United States. I would go even further and claim that it's absolutely impossible for a truth-teller even to get a job as an unpaid intern in the White House, much less that of a Chief Executive Officer. We would never have been able to witness even a romantic oral sex story between two enthusiastic White House interns if at least one of them had ever had the temerity to tell the truth in public.

In fact, what distinguishes a President from simple mortals is exactly this ability to never be sincere, never give away what he really thinks, never tell the truth – even when drunk, drugged or under torture. I can't imagine Clinton committing such an imprudence as Monica Lewinsky herself when she told Tripp in one of the taped telephone conversations: 'I was brought up with lies. I have lied my entire life.'

After all, this is what Niccolo Machiavelli tried to achieve by *Il Principe* almost 500 years ago – to entice the contemporary politicians into this kind of sincerity, generally unacceptable even in those times. Logically, he died like a pariah, abandoned by everyone, poor and miserable.

To accuse a modern top-rank politician of lying is more or less the same as to indict a fish for being wet. The monstrosity and cynicism of this accusation left half of the world flabbergasted. Suddenly even Dr. Hannibal Lecter looked like an innocent child compared to special prosecutor Starr. Everybody smelled a rat. Hillary was the first one to recover from the shock and to counterattack. Her appearance in the *Today Show* on Tuesday, January 27th, has become the climax of the whole story and was probably more important for Clinton's popularity (which soared instantly) than his own State of the Union speech the very same day. With a poker face, calm and imperturbable, the First Lady dismissed the whole affair as a right-wing conspiracy. It was marvellous. Hillary demonstrated to the whole world to be a dyed-in-the-wool conspiracy theorist, as Hans Ree believed only Russians were. The conspiracy existed – the Nation was reassured – so there was absolutely nothing to worry about.

This declaration had a remarkably soothing effect on the democratic press. No one seemed to be interested in finding out who these right-wingers were and what were they conspiring about. It looks like Hillary found those magic and politically correct words that cast a sort of spell upon the media and turned it somewhat lethargic about the whole business.

Before continuing and descending from these sunlit summits to the stinking mire of chess politics I ought to explain to the readers my personal attitude towards politics in general. Although I happen to have studied political sciences at the university, it never aroused in me any other feelings than aversion and distress, a combination of sentiments that has been recently moulded by Alex de la Iglesia into the fundamental concept of ASCOPENA. Perhaps the decision to devote my life (or at least the best years of my life) to chess was partly determined by the inner impulse to avoid any contact with the everyday realities of life and all the political intrigues related to it. Unfortunately the simultaneous unwillingness to develop autism or evolve into a fully-fledged conformist has gradually undermined my life philosophy and rendered elusive my early plans.

My conflict with Kasparov that arose at a certain point and has since so often been misrepresented in the press by corrupt journalists was probably inevitable, considering all the differences in upbringing and antagonism of our views on life. Nothing is new under the sun and a similar conflict took place exactly 150 years ago, when a young Russian aristocrat, Mikhail Bakunin, met Karl Marx for the first time: 'Marx called me a sentimental idealist, and he was right; I called him a vain man, perfidious and crafty, and I also was right.'

Politics always symbolized for me mainly dirt and lies and I was determined to avoid any involvement in it at any price. On the contrary, Kasparov from the very beginning considered it to be the most propitious medium for him, perhaps in the belief that by the single virtue of being ill-bred, ignorant and pathologically mendacious he could automatically be elevated to the rank of politician and thus be guaranteed a brilliant career. Hence his early militancy in the Communist Party, his subsequent involvement in the 'democratic' movement and his recent flirtations with General Lebed. As any person blinded with a lust for power, Kasparov needed total control in all spheres of his activities, and this is where the problems for the chess players began. Creating new chess organizations and destroying them immediately has become his favourite pastime, and most chess insiders have probably lost count already. The PCA was number six or seven. It has become a sort of paranoid game which, however, had one significant implication for the chess players – the increasing importance of pertaining to a certain lobby in order not to be blacklisted by the petty mafia which was little by little spinning its web in the chess world. Those who didn't want to submit and dared to express their opinion were more or less forced to leave chess – as Gata Kamsky did. It hardly took anyone by surprise that the decision of one of the best players in the world to change profession was met either by total indifference or rather unveiled glee. The PCA nowadays is not among the most popular combinations of letters – it is as difficult to find a responsible PCA director willing to give it a face as to track a conspiring right-winger in the United States. But those who attribute this to the criticism it was subjected to during the past five years are mistaken. Rather, it is evidence of the 'take and run' mentality of its shyster-founders. I owe a piece of friendly overview of the proceedings of those 'professional organizers working in the commercial environment' to the authors of the book *A New Era* (published last year).

It became clear that this 'star' possessed the maturity and cultural level of Monica Lewinsky.

It started with the famous deal with Intel in 1993, which had the potential of providing a solid financial basis for chess for many years to come, but turned instead into one of the PCA's major management failures due to its inability to renew it two years later. It does not require too much effort to fathom the reasons: obstinate reluctance of the 'professional managers' to condescend to a public accounting of the PCA finances created a atmosphere of distrust and suspicion; their firm determination to hush all critics by blacklisting them also produced a certain amount of negative publicity. At the same time, the irresponsible behaviour of the PCA champion both over and off the chess board was not really encouraging for the sponsor. It became clear that this 'star' possessed the maturity and cultural level of Monica Lewinsky. This petty tyrant who imposed on the others a famous 'gag rule', forbidding any criticism of both PCA and sponsors, was the first one to violate it by declaring himself 'Intel's slave'. Fortunately there were no oral sex episodes involved. Kasparov's behind-the-scene deal with IBM, Intel's main rival, was the final drop that put an end to this brave adventure 'in the commercial environment'. Chess lost one of its best sponsors ever. Another professional secret of the PCA 'managers' consisted in calling on the organizers of the major traditional events one by one, offering them a deal that shocked me by its originality when I first learnt about it from one of my friends, who had received such a call. The organizers were being offered to pay a moderate sum of $10,000 to the PCA; 'in return' they had to yield all the rights of the events to the PCA. That is, the PCA was going to dictate the list of participants and get all credit for the organization of the tournament not only without paying anything, but being paid themselves. This was what they meant by 'searching for sponsorship in the commercial environment'.

The new era proclaimed by the above-mentioned book was nothing less than an era of shysterism and hypocrisy, blacklisting and dubious machinations, favouritisms and gag rules. The only logical consequence of such 'professional management' could be the loss of sponsors, a reduction of the number of tournaments and a rapid deterioration of the moral climate in the chess world.

I could add dozens of revealing details and considerations about the PCA, FIDE, the last World Championship in Groningen, etc., and fill several issues of New In Chess, but my initial fervour is gradually giving place to the same familiar feeling of ASCOPENA that prevents me from doing it. Fighting windmills is pathetic, isn't it ? Why shouldn't journalists do this work, instead of piling up absurd and mediocre interviews?

When Dirk Jan called to ask me to annotate a game, his words were: 'Valery, you know, we are always happy to have your contributions; we are a neutral platform, open to everyone.' There was something familiar about this neutrality, where did it come from, Pontius Pilate?

No, it was in 'Titanic' – do you remember those final close-ups of the movie after the ship had sunk and 1,500 passengers found themselves in the ice-cold waters of the North Atlantic? There were twenty half-empty life boats nearby with hundreds of solemn observers watching them freeze. Only one of these boats came to the rescue to save six human lives. The other nineteen remained impeccably neutral.

So should we follow Hillary Clinton's example and plainly dismiss the PCA as a right-wing conspiracy? Why not? Baghdad will be bombed anyway.

SI 14.7
Alexey Shirov
Valery Salov
Wijk aan Zee 1998 (12)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6
I had never played the Najdorf as Black before 1998. You may consider this move as my modest tribute to Don Miguel's memory: a dear friend, an intelligent and unassuming person, a genius and a true lover of chess.

6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3
Here I did not fail to notice that this manoeuvre is accomplished by White under much more favourable conditions than in my game with Friso Nijboer.

9...♗g7 10.♗e2 h5 11.♗xg4 hxg4
Recapturing with the bishop, 11...♗xg4, is a path well-trodden by some of the PCA activists. The attentive reader, exhausted already by the introduction, will easily understand all the unpleasant associations linked to it. Besides, it is one of those modern opening variations which make one think seriously about the timeliness of switching to shuffle chess (known otherwise as Fischer-random chess) – yet another great invention of the legendary American champion. While Fischer's clock has already won universal and almost unanimous recognition, his ideas of shuffling the pieces before the start of the game still await their turn (it must be noted that another great innovator, David Bronstein, had a similar idea some time ago). If accepted on a professional level, this innovation would mean the return to the golden age of chess: the age of innocence and creativity will return, without us losing any of the essential attractions of the game we love. In this case the words 'the best chess player in the world' will again acquire some sense, they will refer to a person who plays chess better than all the others (i.e. finds the best moves over the board), rather than one who has more money, more seconds, better databases, computers, etc.

The advantages of shuffle chess are too obvious to waste time enumerating them here. Then what is impeding its recognition? The answer to this question, alas, is too obvious as well: the same petty mafia of obscurants led by Kasparov. Those who are familiar with the games of the last Kasparov-Deep Blue match had a chance to notice his total dependence on opening preparation. Without any doubt, no one realized as well as Kasparov himself that there exists a huge difference between starting to play independently on move 5 in an equal position (an approach that he adopted in several games, following someone's ill advice) and reproducing a home analysis up to move 30. Many observers claimed that the PCA champion played that match like a candidate master. I dismiss these evaluations as lacking in objectivity. In my opinion, the level demonstrated by Kasparov oscillated between 2550- 2650, i.e. corresponded to the strength of a very good professional, but still very far from that of the best player in the world. And I'm sure that Kasparov realized as well as I did that the introduction of Fischer-random chess would effectively mean the end of his chess career.

So how did he react? He tried to pull in the opposite direction, started to promulgate the so-called 'advanced chess' (man + computer against man + computer) in order, apparently, to reduce the creative level to zero. Perhaps I'll give a more extended commentary after the match Kasparov-Topalov (planned for May in Leon). For the moment I'll limit my criticism by pointing out that 'advanced chess' finds itself in approximately the same relation to chess, as, for example, oral sex to sex – just another interesting modality although somewhat limited in its possibilities of practical application – not even leading to adultery, according to Bill Clinton. Or yet another, even better example – just imagine 'advance sex': man + vibrator versus man + vibrator. What do you think? Amazingly exciting, isn't it?

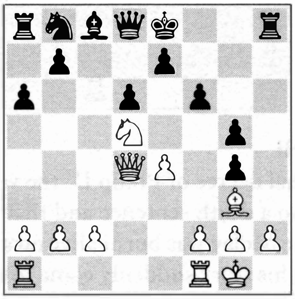
What I like most about 'advanced chess' is its

name, which so aptly indicates the advanced stage of paranoia of its inventor.
Anyway, let's get back to the game.

12.0-0

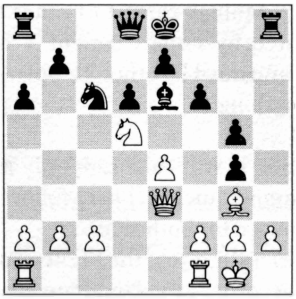
Here Alexey deliberated for half an hour the possibility of reducing my anti-PCA variation to ashes by the impetuous 12.♘d5, but fortunately for me he noticed some defence for Black at the end of a long and obscure line that I find difficult even to reproduce.

12...♗xd4 13.♕xd4 f6 14.♘d5!



Capablanca was famous for his instant and precise evaluation of any position, no matter how complicated. I could read in the eyes of Alexey and all the other tournament participants (including those of the B-group) attracted by the unusual course of our game, that no one of them was inferior to Capa in this respect.
Indeed, all White's pieces are excellently mobilized, his king is safe, he has total control of the centre and plenty of dangerous attacking plans. To say that Black is behind in development is a clear understatement, considering that he has no development whatsoever.
In the post-Monicagate style of Hillary and Bill or the pre-PCA style of Vasily Ivanchuk I was trying to avoid any visual contact with my position, not believing that such irreparable damage could have been self-inflicted in only 13 moves. 13, my goodness! I almost panicked. Perhaps Steinitz would have kept more sang-froid in such a position, but never before in my life have I felt so bitterly the enormous gap separating me from Steinitz. If only my a-pawn were still on a7! Instantly I recalled Don Miguel again, this time already with mixed feelings. It was clear that the waiting tactics didn't work, it was necessary to start developing my pieces.

14...♘c6 15.♕e3 ♗e6



16.♘b6?

A very tempting but wrong continuation. The correct plan for White consisted in advancing his queenside pawns to c4, b4, etc. in order to gain more space, reducing Black's possibilities to passive defence. In any case, it was vitally important to leave the knight in its formidable position in the centre.
As the outcome of this game is so closely allied to the destiny of White's last knight, I suggest you concentrate on its movements and consider it henceforward, not as a simple knight but as a Knight Templar. Templars were a religious military order founded by the Crusaders in Jerusalem in 1118 and suppressed by Clement V in 1312. They accumulated fabulous wealth and created a kind of international banking empire, financing many European monarchs. The last Grandmaster of this order, Jacques de Molay was one of the most powerful men in Europe at the beginning of the 14th century.
It's clear that such a noble and well-placed Knight never ought to be sent for a minor errand of besieging a forlorn and unimportant castle (rook a8).

16...♖b8

Even the cool 16...♔f7 was worth considering, but after the text Black's position is not bad anyway, so there is no need for drastic measures.

17.c4 ♔f7 18.c5 dxc5 19.♕xc5 ♕g8!

Obviously White can't take the rook on b8 and leave his king unprotected.

20.f4! gxf3 21.♖xf3 ♖d8 22.♖af1 ♕g6 23.♘d5!

An absolutely correct decision; this knight certainly belongs to the central square d5, from which it will support White's assault on the black king. But from this moment onward there is a fatalistic aura around it: this knight is going to die.

Jacques de Molnay came to France from Cyprus, invited by Pope Clement V in August 1306, accompanied by other Templars, not suspecting anything.

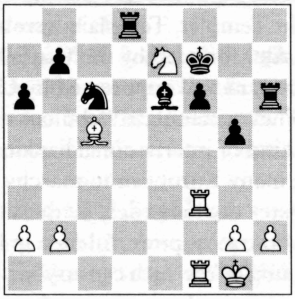
23...♕xe4

The position is still balanced, only its character is changing quickly. There follows a forced move sequence for both sides.

On October 13th, 1307, the French king, Philip IV the Fair, orders the simultaneous arrest of several thousand Templars in one of the most extraordinary police operations of all times. They are accused of conspiracy, apostasy, blasphemy, obscene rites, sodomy and idolatry. Many are tortured with savage cruelty by the king's functionaries and the Inquisition. Of the 138 templars interrogated in Paris immediately after their arrest, 36 died under torture. Almost all confessed.

24.♘xe7 Jacques de Molnay is arrested with the others, he will spend seven years in prison.

24...♕d4+! 25.♗f2! ♕xc5 26.♗xc5 ♖h6



27.h4!??

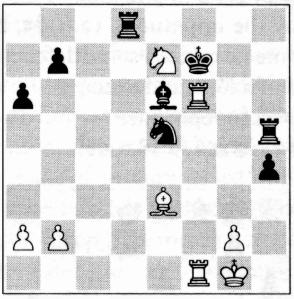
It was still possible to play 27.♘xc6 or 27.♘f5, with a likely draw, but after having won his previous four white games and spurred by my lack of time, Alexey decides to try his luck.

The last act of the drama took place on March 18th, 1314. Grandmaster Jacques de Molay and three other Knights who had survived the interrogation but confessed under torture, were sentenced to life imprisonment and invited to admit their culpability once again. In an incredible display of heroism they proclaimed themselves innocent of all the imputations and retracted their earlier testimony. Such a relapse into heresy was usually fatal.

27...gxh4! 28.♗e3 ♘e5!

This move had escaped Alexey's attention when he played 27.h4. Now White is in serious trouble.

29.♖3f2 ♖h5! 30.♖xf6+



30...♔xe7!!

By personal decree of Philip IV the verdict was changed to a death sentence and that same day Jacques de Molay was burnt alive on a slow fire. Why did this story suddenly come to my mind? Random association perhaps. The recently published book of Shirov's selected games is called *Fire on Board*. I almost burnt my fingers taking this knight off the board.

The rest of the game was marked by my sharp time-trouble and Alexey's dejection after the loss of his key piece.

31.♗c5+ ♖d6 32.♗xd6+ ♔xd6 33.b3 ♖g5 34.♖h6 ♔e7 35.♖xh4 ♗d5 36.♖f2? ♘f3+

White resigned.

By the way, Clement V died of nephritis in atrocious pain on April 20th of the same year. Philip the Fair was poisoned a few months later.

Could there exist any possible connection between the Templars and Monica Lewinsky's case? Many historians would give an affirmative answer to this question. It seems incredible, but life is full of weird parallels. For example, the author of the first chess book, the king of Castilla, Alfonso X the Wise (the original of this book is kept in the library about 200 meters from my house), also took a keen interest in the Templars and even made one of his young courtiers enter the order to find out all its secrets. One year later this courtier declared that he would rather die than tell him the truth.

Following on from the previous article, the next is a further example of what can sometimes result, when a leading GM is given carte blanche *to say what he feels. The personal hostility between Tony Miles and Nigel Short was well-known, and when the former beat the latter in a crucial final round game at the 1998 British Championships, it was perhaps inevitable that he would react somewhat gleefully in print. It is certainly the rudest game annotation ever to appear in New In Chess, and such personal insults do not make for especially dignified reading. However, if the truth be told, we all enjoy seeing a good verbal slugfest, and besides, Nigel is well able to take care of himself in such battles. The game itself is a splendid technical achievement by the 'Beast of Birmingham'.*

NOTES BY

Tony Miles

RE 9.2
Tony Miles
Nigel Short
Torquay British Championship 1998

Before moving on to the game I must correct some erroneous publicity concerning the encounter. Firstly, 'Miles hadn't beaten Short for 20 years' – M. Pein. Actually I haven't beaten him for 16 years, but then he hasn't beaten me for 14. In fact, I had much the better of our only meeting in that period. The relevance of this is that I didn't suffer any psychological problems playing him because I lost a few games when he was still in nappies for the simple reason that I can't remember them.

Secondly, 'The two are not on speaking terms' – again M. Pein. Not true. I said good morning to Gump as recently as 1994 in Moscow. Never the fastest or most fluent of orators, I assume he is still trying to think of a witty retort.

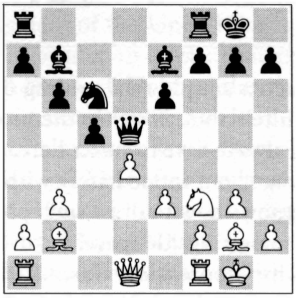
1.♘f3

The thing about players who spend ten years playing in Category 25 tournaments, is that they tend to be more than averagely up-to-date with developments in trendy main lines, having analysed them extensively with their seconds, firsts and 'house-guests' to use Gump's phrase. I presume that designation makes them cheaper! Anyway, I prefer to play just one opponent, so will skip the theoretical discussions for today.

1...d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗e7 5.b3

Again, I was content with the choice of opening. I have played this system several times, while my database did not turn up any examples of Gump playing the black side. He started staring into the distance with the air of one who is trying to remember what he looked at many years ago.

5...0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.♗b2 ♘c6 8.e3 b6 9.♘c3 ♗b7 10.cxd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♕xd5 12.d4



An old line which doesn't give White much, of course: but still I was a bit surprised at his choice. The height of Black's ambitions is to exchange off some pieces and shake hands.

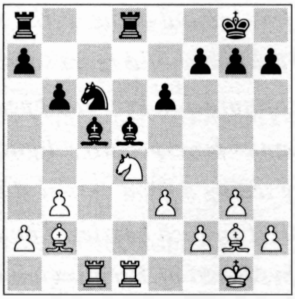
12...♘a5 13.dxc5

ECO recommends 13.♗a3 but I was content to leave the ♘a5 looking slightly silly.

13...♗xc5 14.♕xd5 ♗xd5 15.♖fd1 ♖fd8 16.♖ac1

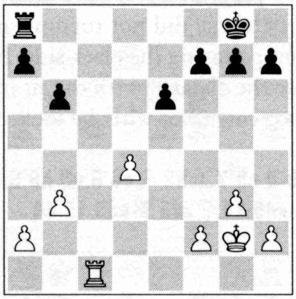
So does White have anything? Well a slightly better king, after the inevitable exchange on g2 and that knight on a5. What is it worth? Maybe a tempo or two: i.e basically nothing, but still more than Black has.

16...♘c6 I prefer 16...♖ac8 first. **17.♘d4**



Giving Black a wide choice of things to exchange. There are many ways to more or less maintain the balance but Gump's choice is the last one I would have gone for.

17...♗xg2 18.♔xg2 ♗xd4 19.♗xd4 ♘xd4 20.♖xd4 ♖xd4 21.exd4



So we reach a simple rook ending but one in which White's rook is vastly the more active. Black will always have to suffer here.

21...g5 Banged out immediately with the air of one who knows how to draw such positions by grabbing some kingside space.

22.♖c7 This impression was a little undermined, though, when he sank into thought for 15 minutes here.

22...♖d8 23.♖xa7 ♖xd4 24.♖b7 ♖d6

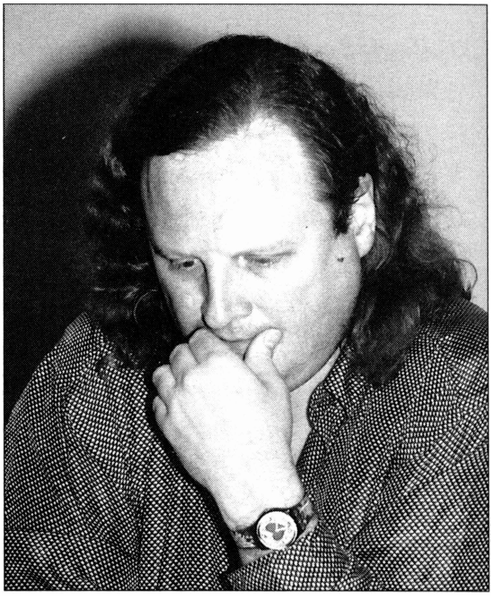
24...♖b4 was also possible but he prefers to keep the white king from the queenside.

25.a4 ♔g7 26.♔f1 g4 27.♔e2 h5 28.b4 e5 29.a5

Since 29.♔e3 would be met by 29...♖f6 I went for the simple approach.

29...bxa5 30.bxa5 ♖d4

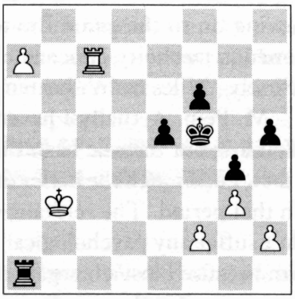
Clearly 30...♖a6 31.♖b5 followed by heading the king towards b5 is unpleasant.



CECIL ROSNER

Tony Miles: What do you mean, not on speaking terms?

31.a6 ♖a4 32.a7 ♔g6 33.♔d3 f6 34.♔c3 ♔f5 35.♔b3 ♖a1 36.♖c7!



This is the position I had in mind when playing 29.a5. Black's counterplay is stopped dead since if 36...♔e4? 37.♖c4+ and 38.♖a4.

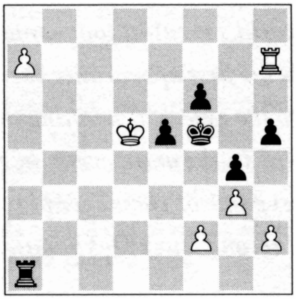
36...♔e6 37.♔c4 ♔d6 38.♖f7(?)

Careless. I didn't see what he was doing. To some extent that's understandable since he isn't doing anything. But 38.♖h7 was correct and if 38...♔c6 39.♖f7 or 38...♔e6 39.♔b5 ♔f5 40.♖c7! again prevents ...♔e4

38...♔e6 39.♖h7? 39.♖c7 ♔d6 40.♖h7 was still fine. **39...♔f5**

Here it dawned on me that my shallow observation that ...♔f5 would leave h5 en prise with check was not entirely relevant. Oh well, nothing to do.

40.♔d5



40...♖a5+?? An astonishing blunder — pretty much the only way to give back the tempo White had lost. Furthermore, it was not attributable to time trouble since he still had eight minutes left after playing it.

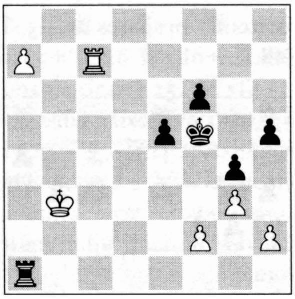
41.♔c6 ♔e4 42.♔b6 ♖a2 43.♖h8 ♖xa7

Best. Presumably, Gump thought this was drawing, but the rook and the king perform some nifty footwork.

44.♔xa7 ♔f3 45.♔b6 ♔xf2 46.♔c5 e4 47.♖xh5 e3 48.♖f5+ ♔g2 49.♖xf6 ♔xh2 50.♔d4 e2 51.♖e6 ♔xg3 52.♔d3 Simplest, though 52.♖xe2 ♔f3 53.♖e3+ ♔f2 54.♔e4 g3 55.♖f3+ is also good enough. **52...♔f3 53.♖e3+ ♔f2 54.♔e4 g3 55.♖f3+** Black resigned.

My shortest win of the championship! I don't know if 644 moves is a record but I'm certainly glad I didn't do it in the days of adjournments.

Anyway, this game still leaves the question: ignoring the exchange of stupidities on moves 39 and 40, where exactly did Black go wrong? Let's go back to the position after my 36th move.



Obviously, Black has problems but something that didn't occur to me during the game — for obvious reasons — is what if it was White's turn here?

If 1.♔b4 ♔e4 2.♖c4+ ♔f5! forces White to repeat.

While if 1.♖b7 ♖a6 2.♔c4 ♔e4 3.♔b5 ♖a1 and Black has gained a vital tempo.

So surprisingly, White would be in zugzwang!

If White can get his king to b5, though, he does win e.g.:

1...♔e6 2.♔c4 ♔f5 (or 2...♔d6 3.♖h7 ♔e6 4.♔b5 ♔f5 5.♖c7) 3.♔b5 ♖b1+ as good as any 4.♔c6 ♖a1 5.♔b7 ♖b1+ 6.♔c8 ♖a1 7.♔b8 ♔e4 8.a8♕+♕+♕+♕ ♖xa8+ 9.♔xa8 ♔f3 10.♖c2 f5 11.♔b7 f4 12.♔c6 ♔g2 13.♔d5 ♔xh2 14.gxf4 exf4 15.♔e4 etc.

This leads to the interesting conclusion that Black could have drawn on the previous move. Instead of 35...♖a1, either 35...♖a5! or 35...♖a6! would have lost the necessary tempo to escape the zugzwang!

So does this mean that the diagram position is really zugzwang? Hard to believe!

At this point, it is necessary to apply the Clintonian Improbability Principle: That 'which is hard to believe is generally untrue.' (As opposed to the Clintonian Impossibility Principle: 'That which is impossible to believe is generally President of the United States' – which has little relevance to chess, though) – combined with Sherlock Holmes' theory of escaping from zugzwang: 'When you have eliminated all the plausible moves, you'd better play what you have left quickly, before you lose on time.'

The result is 36...h4 but 37.gxh4 ♔g6 38.♔c4 ♔h5 39.♔b5 ♔h4 40.♖h7 ♔g5 41.♔b6 ♔f4 42.♖f7 (slowing things down a bit) 42...f5 43.♖f8 still seems to win for White.

At this point, I think I will tell you that I am nostalgic for the days before computers were invented, so Fritz and his friends haven't checked any of this. I leave it to you, gentle reader, to sort it out and find the mistakes!

Although Wijk aan Zee has long been one of the world's greatest tournaments, it was not until 1999 that Garry Kasparov made his first appearance there. Predictably enough, he dominated the event, even to the extent of winning the rest day blitz tournament by a point and a half margin! In the main event, he also played what, in my humble opinion, is the greatest game of chess ever played. The game was annotated by Kasparov's loyal second Yury Dokhoian.

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

Kasparov, clearly enjoying his analysis, whilst faithful second Yuri Dokhoian looks on.

NOTES BY

Yury Dokhoian

PU 9.14
Garry Kasparov
Veselin Topalov
Wijk aan Zee 1999 (4)

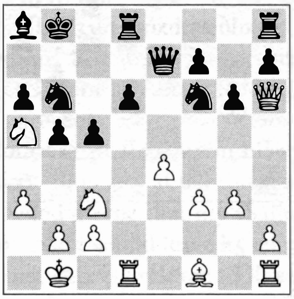
1.e4 d6

Veselin plays the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence extremely rarely, and if he wanted to surprise Garry with his choice of opening, he certainly achieved this, as in our preparations for the game we did not anticipate the possible employment of this defence. On the other hand, perhaps there is something symbolic about the fact that Kasparov managed to carry out one of his most brilliant and lengthy combinations, in a game where the opening stage has no particular significance for the theory of the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence.

2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♗e3 ♗g7 5.♕d2 c6 6.f3 b5 7.♘ge2 ♘bd7 8.♗h6 ♗xh6 9.♕xh6 ♗b7 10.a3!?

A micro-innovation, which, however, has no influence on this opening battle: with subsequent accurate play, Black has sufficient counter-chances. **10...e5 11.0-0-0 ♕e7 12.♔b1 a6 13.♘c1 0-0-0 14.♘b3 exd4 15.♖xd4 c5 16.♖d1 ♘b6**

Black consistently prepares d6-d5. **17.g3 ♔b8 18.♘a5 ♗a8**

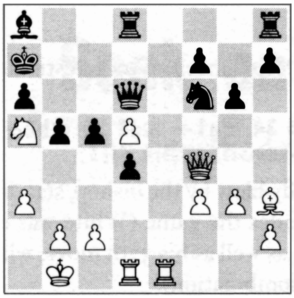


According to Kasparov, already at this point he began seeking an opportunity to bring his queen from h6 somewhere closer to the black king. After all, with the piece set-up ♘a5+♗h3 and ♔b8+♗a8 the appearance of the queen at b6 may prove very costly for Black.

19.♗h3 d5 20.♕f4+ ♔a7 21.♖he1 d4!

Bad is 21...dxe4 22.fxe4 ♘h5 (22...♘xe4? 23.♘xe4 ♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♗xe4 25.♖e1) 23.♕f2.

22.♘d5 ♘bxd5 23.exd5 ♕d6



24.♖xd4!

The start of a purely problem-like multi-move combination, where White sacrifices practically his entire set of pieces.

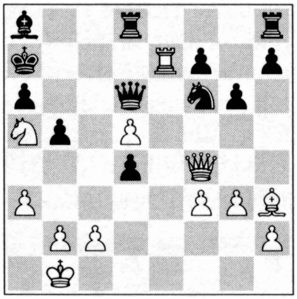
24...cxd4?

The unexpected rook sacrifice had a magical effect on Veselin, and he decided to accept the challenge, having calculated, as it seemed to him, as far as a draw...

During the game Garry was very afraid of the imperturbable 24...♔b6!, disrupting the rhythm of the white pieces. As analysis shows, in this case Black's chances would not have been worse: 25.b4 (25.♘b3 ♗xd5! – the rook is poisoned: 25...cxd4? 26.♕xd4+ ♔c7 27.♕a7+ ♗b7 28.♘c5 ♖b8 29.♖e7+ ♕xe7 30.♘xa6+ ♔d6 31.♕c5+ – 26.♕xd6+ ♖xd6 27.♖d2 with a probable draw) 25...♕xf4 (25...♘xd5 26.♕xd6+ ♖xd6 27.bxc5+ ♔xc5 28.♘b3+) 26.♖xf4 ♘xd5 27.♖xf7 cxb4 28.axb4 ♘xb4 (28...♖he8!?) 29.♘b3, and a draw is the most probable outcome.

When he went in for the rook sacrifice, Kasparov himself said that he certainly took account of Veselin's uncompromising character, and of his readiness to compete in the calculation of variations and breadth of imagination. And so, the time for the dessert has arrived!

25.♖e7+!!



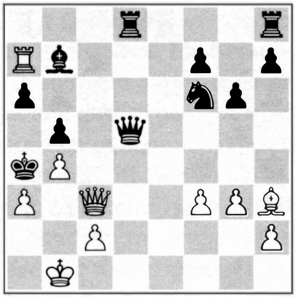
25...♔b6

The second white rook offers itself, but it cannot be taken: 25...♕xe7 26.♕xd4+ ♔b8 27.♕b6+ ♗b7 28.♘c6+ with mate, and 25...♔b8 also does not save the game: 26.♕xd4 ♘d7 27.♗xd7 ♗xd5 28.c4 ♕xe7 (28...bxc4 29.♘c6+) 29.♕b6+ ♔a8 30.♕xa6+ ♔b8 31.♕b6+ ♔a8 32.♗c6+ ♗xc6 33.♘xc6. The black king is obliged to set out on a lengthy journey to the e1-square!

26.♕xd4+ ♔xa5

26...♕c5 does not save Black: 27.♕xf6+ ♕d6 28.♗e6!! (White's piece sacrifices pour forth as though from a horn of plenty) 28...♔xa5 (28...♗xd5 29.b4 ♗c6 (29...♗xf3 30.♗d5!) 30.♕xf7 ♕d1+ 31.♔b2 ♕d4+ 32.♔a2) 29.b4+ ♔a4 30.♕c3 ♗xd5 31.♔b2! and mates.

27.b4+ ♔a4 28.♕c3 ♕xd5 29.♖a7 ♗b7



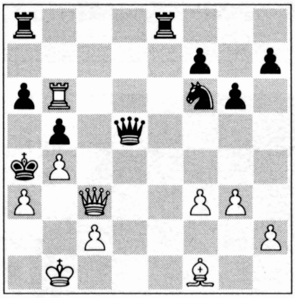
Having reached this point, Veselin considered that White's only option was to reconcile himself to a draw after 30.♕c7 ♕d1+ 31.♔b2 ♕d4+.

30.♖xb7!

A cold shower. White continues his attack a rook down.

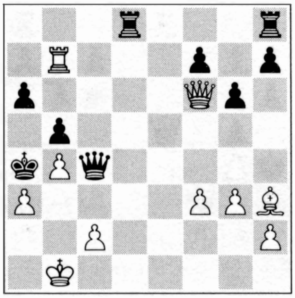
30...♕c4

For a practical game this is the most natural decision. Let us consider the other possible defences. It is very important that 30...♖d6 does not work because of 31.♖b6! This key overloading idea, typical of many branches of the combination, also works in the given case. Probably the most difficult problems would have been posed by 30...♖he8 31.♖b6 ♖a8 (31...a5 32.♗f1), but in this case too the brilliant 32.♗f1!! (pointed out by Ligterink) leads to a win for White!



After 32.♗f1!! (not 32.♗e6? ♖xe6 33.♖xe6 ♕c4!, unclear) 32...♖e1+ (32...♘d7 33.♖d6 ♖e1+ 34.♔b2 ♖e3 35.♕xe3 ♕e5+ 36.♕xe5 ♘xe5 37.♗e2+–, or 32...♖ec8 33.♕xc8! ♕d1+ 34.♔a2 ♕d5+ 35.♗c4+–, or 32...♘g8 33.♖d6 ♖ec8 34.♕b2 ♖xc2 35.♕xc2+ ♕b3+ 36.♕xb3+ ♔xb3 37.♖d3++–) 33.♕xe1 ♘d7 34.♖b7! ♕xb7 35.♕d1!! ♔xa3 36.c3 mate is inevitable!

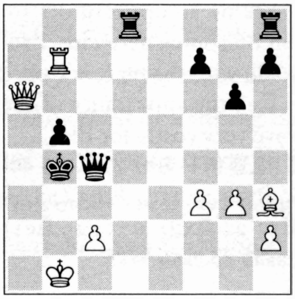
31.♕xf6



31...♔xa3?

The best chance was 31...♖d1+ 32.♔b2 ♖a8 (32...♕d4+ 33.♕xd4 ♖xd4 34.♖xf7 ♖d6 35.♖e7+–) 33.♕b6 ♕d4+ 34.♕xd4 ♖xd4 35.♖xf7 a5 36.♗e6 axb4 37.♗b3+ ♔a5 38.axb4+ ♔b6 39.♖xh7 when, with three pawns for the exchange, White must win. Black decides to drink the cup of White's attack right to the dregs...

32.♕xa6+ ♔xb4



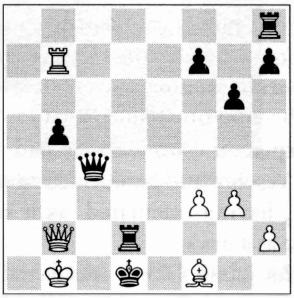
33.c3+!

Possibly this nuance was underestimated by Veselin.

33...♔xc3 34.♕a1+ ♔d2 35.♕b2+ ♔d1 36.♗f1!

This deadly blow by the bishop, standing in ambush, decides the game (White was obliged to foresee it, as well as his 37th move, when beginning the combination).

36...♖d2



37.♖d7!

This last brilliant stroke by White clears the smoke of battle. It is amusing that, had the h8 rook been at g8, White's entire brilliant combination would not have worked...

37...♖xd7 38.♗xc4 bxc4 39.♕xh8 ♖d3 40.♕a8 c3 41.♕a4+ ♔e1 42.f4 f5 43.♔c1 ♖d2 44.♕a7

Black resigned.

This is certainly one of the most beautiful games that I (and I think not only I) have ever seen. I think that it will not be wrong to assume that this 'Wijk aan Zee masterpiece' (which was how it was christened by the tournament organizers and journalists) will please and inspire with its beauty both present and future admirers of our wonderful game called chess.

New In Chess has always been strongly associated with the latest developments in opening theory, both via the magazine and the Yearbooks. Occasionally, though, the magazine turns its searchlight on those less popular areas of opening theory, as in the following piece by Jesper Hall. He visited one of Europe's most creative opening innovators, the Swedish player Rolf Martens, and took a closer look at some of his extraordinary ideas.

Seek, and thou shalt find!

The unorthodox explorations of Rolf Martens

Jesper Hall

My first impression

It is the Swedish championship in Malmö in 1986 and I have just turned 15. In the analysis room all the leading players of Sweden are gathered around one table. What immediately strikes me is how quiet they are and how all of them focus on a fairheaded man's quick movements on the board. I enter the crowd and see how the man plays a knight to h6 over and over again. As I have had a classical education in chess, Tarrasch's words 'Springer am Rande bringt Kummer und Schande' (a knight on the edge will cause trouble and shame) start ringing in my head. With fascination I follow the nimble hands. Sometimes the onlookers sigh heavily and shake their heads, but when they try to dispute the man's findings they lose the analysis over and over again. I remember thinking that this man must be a genius or a madman. Later that week he shares 3rd-4th place in the Swedish blitz championship. During the following year a heavy debate between the man and some of the top players arises in the Swedish chess magazines. Once in a while they succeed in cracking some variations, but mostly Rolf Martens impresses them with his analytical capacities.

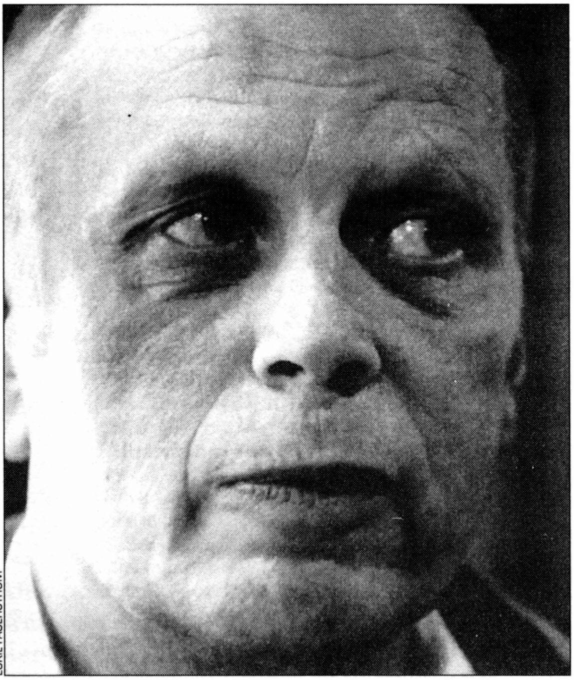
In 1988 he wins the blitz championship. Some of his opponents start playing his openings themselves in more serious competitions and they, too, score notable victories. Yet, his openings still wait for a real breakthrough. Few players dare to base their opening repertoire on Mr Martens' unique UltraHypermodern Counter-Attack (UHCA) system for Black.

The Myth

Rolf Martens is the closest you can get to a chess myth in Sweden. He became Swedish champion in 1967 and impressed everyone with his dynamic and tactical play, for which he rarely used more than an hour per game. In 1969, he scored 3-3 against Ulf Andersson in a training match which has become legendary. He was also a promising student, predestined to succeed in whatever area he was to choose. Gradually, in the early seventies, he retired from both the academic field and the chess world. Before his comeback in the mid-eighties, he was more or less silent as far as chess was concerned. Those interested in political matters may have seen a number of pamphlets and flyers published by Rolf Martens from 1974 on.

Meeting Rolf Martens

A shabby door on the third floor. His handshake is firm and his smile tentative to prevent his cigarette from falling. I am at Rolf Martens' place.



ESKIL FASERSTROM

'In 1987 grandmaster Benjamin got a terrific game with my Snake against Portisch, who really behaved like a rabbit encountering that new opening.'

The walls of the dark one-room-apartment are occupied by shelves filled with binders and folders. All are marked with mysterious letter combinations that probably only Mr Martens understands. Smoke billows and the strongest source of light in the dusky room is the enormous computer screen on the desk. Except for the chess analysis and the political texts there are piles of jazz records. Bird, Dizzy and all the others.

The first thing that strikes you when you meet Rolf Martens are his blue eyes that all the time seem to have a direction. The arguments and analysis are almost forced out by a voice which always knows what the next word will be. Never a hint of hesitation as to what course the conversation will take. In his mind the thoughts are swift as lightning. His visualisation of the inner chessboard seems to be crystal-clear. It is hard to believe that this man has not played a single game for twenty years.

Rolf Olav Martens was born in 1942, during the German occupation, in the small township Rødberg in Norway. His father was a dentist, a man as scientific in his work as he was romantic in his chess playing. 'I don't like that modern style with retreats all the time', he used to say.

Mr Martens tells me a story from some time before his birth. Norway was occupied, and now the Nazis were attacking the Soviet Union too. How long might that country last? His father's chess partner argued against too many scary thoughts: 'Remember that the Russians are the world's best chess players.' And of course the War changed direction and Norway was liberated. Chess had a high status in young Mr Martens' home.

He learned the game at the age of five. When he was eight, the family moved to Malmö, Sweden. It was here that he started to play in his first club, in 1957. He must have been rather a good player already, as only two years later, he beats the then Swedish champion, Inge Johansson, to become district champion. He becomes a candidate master in 1961. In 1966 he qualifies for the top group in the Swedish Championship and wins the title the following year. 1967 is the best year of his chess career, as he also came second after Geller in an international tournament in Gothenburg. In 1969 he also plays the aforementioned match against Ulf Andersson. After that things quieten down.

– *What happened?*

'Please let me begin, Jesper, by begging to differ with you on one thing in your introduction. 'No real breakthrough for UCHA so far'? Back in 1982, Harry Schüssler beat the strong grandmasters Sosonko and Miles with my *Kamchatka Defence*. In 1987, grandmaster Benjamin got a terrific game with my *Snake* against Portisch, who really behaved like a rabbit when encountering that new opening. Only, Benjamin later erred grossly and lost. In 1989, Christian Jepson, then a 9th-grader, crushed grandmaster Bellón with my **Scorpion**. In 1996, grandmaster Pia Cramling won in 21 moves as Black against Skripchenko with my *Gaw Paw* Sicilian. Quite nice breakthroughs, *I'd* say. And by the way, Jesper, old co-heretic, couldn't we drop that 'Mr'?

'I had not expected to win the Swedish championship in 1967. I was pretty satisfied with such an achievement in that particular field. Should I try to become a full-time chess professional? The prospect didn't appeal to me. There were so many other interesting and pleasant things to do. I had started to study mathematics at the start of the '60s in Lund, the university town in the southern part of Sweden. I planned to work with computers. But computers bored me a bit too, and weren't they often used by crooks to control other people? There also were some other things of interest. In central Lund, there was a big student café, Athens, open from 8 a.m. until midnight. Here you could sit and play blitz, drink beer and check out the girls. Someone wrote at that time about there being 'a thousand party students in Lund'. For some years, I was one of them. We actually were a pretty privileged crowd. The main reason I quit chess was that I always thought chess, while great fun, was somewhat limited. My political interests came later. In 1971, I started to study again and in 1974 took a degree, with maths and physics as main subjects.'

– *How did politics get into your life?*

'I watched the 1968 movement from a distance. I read a lot, on current affairs and political theory. From 1972 on, I got involved in the anti-Vietnam movement. Earlier, it hadn't occurred to me that things could actually be changed. In 1974, I got into contact with some exile representatives of a small party in Germany 'that nobody had ever heard of'. I realized that their theories were quite right and very advanced, even though this party degenerated and became crooked later on. In politics, the main thing is the question of platform. Does your platform further the common interests of the vast majority of people on earth, or doesn't it? You shouldn't mind if every paper you read screams its head off against it. In 1975 I changed course concerning my profession and started working as a welder at a shipyard. From 1995 on, I've been engaging in some rather intensive international political discussions and struggles via the Internet. Chess started to fascinate me again – perhaps too much! – in the mid-80s, when I found some new things in the openings.'

– *How did you start to invent new openings?*

'This really started with my learning, in 1958, to use that Swedish patent, the *Kaijser Gambit*, 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 **b5**, plan **g6** if White accepts the sacrifice. Fritz Kaijser was a Swedish national team player in the '30s who developed this system in 1944. The basic idea comes either from him or from Opocensky, Czechoslovakia. They both played an earlier, unsatisfactory version of the gambit back in the '30s. Earlier, Argunov, of Kuibyshev, now Samara, on the *Volga*, had invented a quite different gambit, likewise based on 3...b5, but with the idea **e6**, not g6. For some reason, the Kaijser Gambit was always mixed up with the Volga Gambit and even in Sweden was never called anything else than 'the Volga'. Later, some people started naming that gambit after Benko, who had nothing to do with its creation but had begun using it in 1967 – some years after I, for instance, had already dropped it, and 19 years after the gambit had been introduced internationally, by Erik Lundin at the Candidates' Tournament in Saltsjöbaden in 1948 (the event referred to was the Interzonal, not the Candidates' – ed.). After I and some friends had learned of the gambit's history, we saw to it that, from 1959 on, it was called by its proper name at least in some newspaper articles in Sweden. After I stopped playing, that name was totally forgotten again.

'In 1959, I was trying to improve on the 'Kaijser'. One thing that was known in Sweden at that time, and hardly anywhere else, was that after 4.cxb5, Black must play ...a6 at once. Now, how about ...a6 even earlier, 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5, and now *3...a6* – ? After 4.♘c3 b5 5.cxb5 axb5 6.♘xb5, Black with 6...♗a6 7.♘c3 g6 etc could transpose to a Kaijser, having avoided White's important 5.e3 after the 'normal' 3...b5 4.cxb5 a6. I also saw a Volga-type possibility: 6...e6 instead of 6...♗a6. That looked complicated! But this was later to be the main continuation in that gambit of mine which, from 1962 on, came to be called the *Kamchatka Gambit.*

'What to do against 4.a4, then? In 1959, I had no answer to this. But in 1962, I saw that in the Petrosian System, as it was called, 4...e5 5.♘c3 d6 6.e4 g6 etc., it might be a good thing for Black if White had already been forced to reply a4 to ...a6. Then White would no longer have the strategically important continuation a3 plus b4. Thus a new defence system was born, in part based on the gambit 4.♘c3 b5, in part on 4.a4 e5 and so on. The wife of a friend of mine interrupted one of our blitz games in the autumn of 1962, asking, since there were so many 'geographical' opening names, why was there nothing named after the Kamchatka peninsula. That somewhat strange idea happened to suit perfectly the thing I was just inventing, for various reasons.

'For example, doesn't Black's ...♘a6 resemble the Kamchatka peninsula, protruding from 'the Eurasian continent' of his entire position? (At least, if you take a world map and hold the back of it up against the light?)

'Moreover, the move 3...a6 is "even further to the east" than (the real) 'Volga's' 3...b5.

'And, I also liked this as an ironical comment on those people, in Sweden too, who kept calling that very local invention, the Kaijser, by the name of 'Volga'. Did they prefer an exotic name? Perhaps with a Russian touch to it? Well, Kamchatka presumably is sufficiently Russian. And it's hard to get much further away from Sweden (without leaving the earth) than that peninsula.'

– *When did you start a more systematic search?*

'In 1977 I wasn't playing chess any more. But I happened to see something surprising: some tourists were trespassing on my private property! Meaning the variations after 3...a6 which, formerly, only I had been investigating. The *Kamchatka Defence* was my patent opening, of course. I had got used to the fact that, probably, nobody else would try it (except some friends of mine). This suited me fine. But now, Zaitsev had developed a certain attack against both the Kaijser and the Volga Gambits (which were combined into one system only later, by Alburt, in 1984), an attack which actually transposed into my Kamchatka Gambit and which therefore was an attack against that gambit too! Against 3...b5 4.cxb5 a6, Zaitsev continued with 5.♘c3, producing a 'Kamchatka' position, but with the point of replying to 5...axb5 with 6.e4. Would he succeed in 'killing three birds with one stone' with this? I thought, probably not. Anyway, I couldn't resist trying to find at least an antidote to what seemed to be the most dangerous continuation: 6.e4 b4 7.♘b5 d6 8.♗f4. And I found: 8...g6! – later successfully used by that friend of yours, Jesper, Swedish Cadet champion of 1985 Teodor Hellborg.

'In 1981, Teodor Hellborg's father Klas and another friend of mine, Anders Nilsson, asked me for a summary of the Kamchatka Defence. Harry Schüssler was interested too. I started to write one, but was unsatisfied with the defence's reply so far to 4.♘f3. Back in 1962, I had found nothing better than 4...b5 against this. In 1981, this looked doubtful to me. I had always thought, and hoped, that my 3...a6 would be a very strong move – 'the best defence against 1.d4', even. But how to prove this – if possible?

'Originally, I had considered 4...e6 against 4.♘f3. Now if 5.♘c3, things looked good after 5...b5. (I'm calling this the 'Crab Variation'. It had already, then unknown to me, arisen in Novak-Myers, USA 1964, by way of 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 a6 4.♘c3 c5 5.d5 b5.) But a problem which I in 1962 had found insuperable for Black was 5.a4. Now in 1981, I checked this out again, trying everything for Black.

'Eventually, in 1982 I hit on an idea which looked extremely strange, yet logical in its way: What about 5...exd5 6.cxd5 **♗d6**, plan ...♗c7, ...d6,...0-0, ...♘bd7, ...♖e8, ...♖b8, ...♘f8/...♘e5-g6, ...♗d7 ? This set-up clearly would have some big advantages, as compared to that well-known one with g6 and ♗g7. But could the bishop really be moved to d6? As a novice, knowing no opening theory, I had suggested the move 5...♗d6 after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 in 1957. 'No, no', a 'pro' replied, 'Black must play ...d6 and then ...g6 and ...♗g7'. In 1982 I still thought that this was true. Why else was nobody playing 5...♗d6 ? Clearly, there must be some refutation of that move.

'But perhaps in that slightly different position arising out of the Kamchatka Defence, 6...♗d6 might actually work? Still I was sceptical. I told Harry Schüssler about it, because he used my Kamchatka Defence, and he actually dared to try 6...♗d6 in a blitz tournament. This encouraged me, and I started further investigations into that **Snake** that I had invented. My intention was to kill it in the 'standard' position, 5...♗d6, and only 'keep its skin', 6...♗d6 in the Kamchatka, in order to patch up this defence of mine. Only, both variations appeared to work quite well! Even the 5...♗d6 beast – so far – refused to die. In 1985-86, Jonny Hector and Harry Schüssler started scaring people with it internationally.'

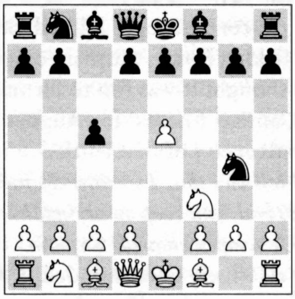
– *Why Snake Benoni?*

'This name in part comes from the sinuous movement of the bishop: ...♗d6 ...♗c7 perhaps ...♗a5. And in part it was chosen because of what happened to the Kaijser Gambit. The name 'Orm' in Swedish, meaning 'Snake', is a permutation of my initials. I engraved them on that opening, as a protection against its later being stolen! And yes, I've been told that, outside Sweden, rather few people today know that this is an invention more or less completely by me. Still, the 'Snake' name has caught on.'

– *How did you find your openings against e4 ?*

'For a long time was I certain that my Kamchatka Defence, 3...a6, was 'the last white spot on the chess opening map'. In the '60s and early '70s, I had tried to make a modified version of it work as a defence against 1.c4 and 1.♘f3. In 1972 I had found what I later called *'The Missing Link Variation'*: 1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 a6 4.e4 e6, with the point 5.e5 **♘g4**. Black gets a good game. This was one of the things you later saw us analyse, Jesper, here in Malmö in 1986. Now in 1984, I had already found a couple of new defences against 1.d4 and one against 1.c4 and 1.♘f3 too. In this, I was inspired by some other people's 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 a6, which now I eventually saw *could* work. I called it the *Pawns' Indian Defence* (which sometimes transposes into my 'Kamchatka'). It earlier had looked so strange, with that ...a6 even before ...c5.

'Since these things existed, perhaps there *was* some good new defence against 1.e4 too – which I had earlier always thought there couldn't be. I started looking for it! For months, I found nothing. But in early August, 1984, I hit on the idea of an analogy, against 1.e4, to the Kamchatka Defence against 1.d4 – which would mean, then, something new and probably 'flankish' after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e5 – ? Yes, there it was: **3...♘g4!** of course! I saw at once that this move must be quite strong. In fact, independently of me, Kamran Shirazi, USA (ex-Iran and ex-Sweden too) had already played this move once, in 1982. So I later called this variation the *Shirazi/Brohinka*. Why Brohinka? This has been the southern Swedish name for the set-up ...g6 ...♘h6 ...♗g7 ...f6 ...♘f7 since 1945; it had been invented in 1940 by Edward B. Adams, New York, as Krazy Kat. Perhaps it was brought to Sweden with one of those many bombers which made emergency landings here during WW II? Anyway, the Brohinka Knight is that famous one on f7, or even on h6. In UHCA theory, it plays a rather important role. With my finding 3...♘g4!, the UHCA school had already been founded. In the following years, I found several other new defences against 1.e4, or developed ideas by other people, who – wrongly – didn't have much faith in their own inventions. Long ago, Steinitz played ♘h3 in the Two Knights, allowing ♗h3 gxh3. The strength of this was understood by Robert Fischer too.



'Against White's strongest continuation, 4.h3 ♘h6 5.c3, Black has several good set-ups. Just one of them is 5...d5 6.d4 e6. This turned out to be good. Then what about an early ...♘h6 in the French Advance Variation – which had been used by P.-O. Höllfors in Lund in the 1950s and originated from Heidenfeld, South Africa?

'It was rediscovered too, in the '70s, by G. Kaidanov, Moscow.

'I saw that **5...♘h6!** in the French Advance must be quite good. The plan is f6 etc. How about similar plans in other French variations? In 1985, I found 3.♘d2 ♘c6 4.♘gf3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘g4(!). And Anders Nilsson, Lund, found 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 **♘h6** (already seen by Rainer Schlenker, Germany, editor of *Der Randspringer*). The *Space French Defence* was born, with the variations above called by me *Mars*, *Jupiter* and *Pluto*, respectively.'

– *Why only openings for Black?*

'It was always easier for me to find good systems for White in traditional theory. So there was a greater need to find systems for Black. But I do have a few ideas for White too.'

– *Who are your sources of inspiration?*

'Too many to mention. Nimzowitsch, not least. In the beginning of the '70s, Basman and others started the Ultra-Flank-Modernistic School (Rolf Marten's name for this opening strategy – JH). Miles for instance beat Karpov with 1.e4 a6 2.d4 b5 (laughter in the hall!) in 1980 in Skara, Sweden. This gave birth to a more open-minded approach in the chess world. It so happened that I found that decisive move in the UHCA development, 3...♘g4, almost to the day 2199 years after the battle at Cannae (in – 216), a famous battle whose strategy the UHCA one actually resembles. The Carthaginian Hannibal let the Roman army advance in the centre and then hit it from both flanks, a pincer strategy. I liked the idea of Carthage licking Rome, the main empire of that time, and thought it was fun to formulate some UHCA 'Cannae Theses' for August 1985, the 2200th anniversary of that battle.'

– *When I tell you that I intuitively find an opening of yours bad, you keep on saying that my intuition is not developed enough. Explain.*

'You're relatively open-minded, I think, Jesper, yet you probably haven't overcome that traditionalistic 'fossil syndrome' which affects most strong players and which causes you always to think, when seeing something that deviates from the usual patterns – even if there's logic behind it – 'this cannot work!' Take the Snake, for instance, 5...♗d6. Didn't it look extremely strange to everyone – including me! – in the beginning? But after seeing its logic and some of its continuations, people can begin to understand it.

'Now you're saying you find Gerard Welling's and my *North Sea Defence*, of 1983/1985, strange and suspect-looking: 1.e4 g6 2.d4 **♘f6**, with points 3.e5 **♘h5** and 3.♘c3 **d5**. Why do you dislike Black's position after 3.e5 ♘h5 ? Actually, there are – or might be, don't you think? – some advantages for Black in having the knight on h5 instead of on d5, as in Alekhine's Defence. It stays on the kingside, and won't get chased to that bad square b6, as is often the case with ♘d5. And it doesn't stand in the way of the black queen; so dxe5 dxe5 ♛d1 may soon become a threat. Only concrete analysis can tell you whether your intuition is correct or not. When developing the UHCA theory, I often had to change mine.'

– *Is there anything you would like to say before we present some of your variations?*

'I'm trying to base my openings on the strategic laws of chess and not on any urge to present something new at all costs. The experience of many years has taught me to distrust chess theory more and more.

'One example of how an opening has sprung out of a general idea is the *Scorpion*. I had long found White's move 2.c4 after 1.d4 e6 somewhat suspect. What's really wrong with it, I wondered, and how might Black exploit it? The thing is, it weakens White's position on the long diagonal a1-h8. So, **2...c5**! 3.d5 exd5 4.cxd5 d6 – and now Black doesn't have to make that well-known but clearly awkward set-up with ...♘f6, ...g6, ...♗g7. That set-up, true enough, has a terrible dragon on g7, but that dragon cannon is pointed straight at Black's own knight at f6, forcing it to retreat and thus clog the 7th or 8th rank. In the Scorpion, Black instead (in the main line) uses the set-up *♘e7-g6*, *♗e7-f6*, with a considerably less cramped game. The moves ♗e7, ♗f6 form a Scorpion tail, hence the name.

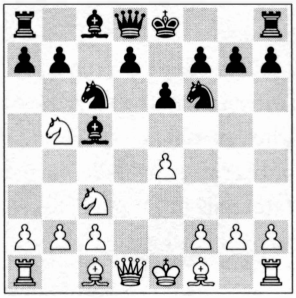
'All openings need to be analysed and practised by many and strong players in order to develop. So far, it has turned out in practice that in critical situations in various UHCA openings, practically nobody but myself has found the decisive countermeasures for Black. So, here's a challenge to others!'

A personal epilogue

Rolf Martens has listed some 70 UHCA opening novelties found by himself or by others. Only a few of them are mentioned above. Naturally some are of a higher quality than others. But even the openings that to my eyes look most ugly have turned out to be hard nuts to crack. As I was writing this article I thought I should pick one opening, at random, to see at what average level Rolf's openings are. My accidental choice fell on the Classical Cobra variation after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘db5 ♗c5. A variation I just could not believe in. I started to analyse, checked in the database and could not find that crushing line for White that I was so sure to find. I even had problems claiming an advantage. Consequently, I decided to play it in my next game. It happened to be in the German Bundesliga against grandmaster Peter Wells.

SI 34.4
Peter Wells
Jesper Hall
Germany 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♘db5 ♗c5



7.♗e3?! ♗xe3 8.♘d6+ ♔e7 9.fxe3 ♕c7 10.♘db5 ♕e5 11.♕d2 a6 12.♘d4 b5 13.0-0-0 ♗b7 14.♘f3 ♕c5 15.a3 ♖ac8 16.♗d3 ♖c7 17.♔b1 ♖hc8 18.♖hf1 d6 19.♘e2 b4 20.a4 ♘a5 21.♘g3 b3 22.♘d4 bxc2+ 23.♗xc2 ♕b6 24.♗d3 ♘c4 25.♗xc4 ♖xc4 26.♕f2 ♖xa4 27.♕f4 ♕a5 28.♘df5+ exf5 29.♘xf5+ ♔f8 30.♕xd6+ ♔g8 31.♘e7+ ♔h8 32.♘xc8 ♗xe4+ 33.♖d3 ♖a1+ 34.♔c2 ♖xf1 0-1

Since my first meeting with Rolf in 1986, both my playing strength and my experiences in life have increased. But I still wouldn't dare to give a definite statement about what category Rolf Martens' ideas belong to. His openings are still in their childhood and need to experience real life before we can arrive at a judgement on which of them will survive.

One thing is for sure, however. Rolf's belief that the small man can change and shake the foundations in a system gives me a spark of hope, and he has convinced me that there still are unexplored ways in the opening phase of a chess game. Combined with his lack of respect for authority, his humorous names for the openings and his philosophical reflections on the game make UHCA one of the most refreshing and thought-provoking concepts I have ever come across during my chess career.

Does this mean that I play his openings in every game? No, just once in a while and only the openings that I completely believe in. For just as with ordinary theory you must rely on your own intuition and your own conclusion of what the position demands. Never should you suffer from what Rolf calls the Fossil Syndrome. Many chess players, particularly the very strong ones, suffer from this fossil syndrome, which consists of that embarrassing condition that, where normally you would have some brain cells working on the opening in chess, the victims instead just have – one big bone stretching from left to right within their heads! Fortunately, this affliction is not, in most cases, incurable. But much brain exercise is needed if you want to get rid of it.

Donner always had a strong association with New In Chess, but his arch-rival Lodewijk Prins was much less well-known outside his native Holland. Yet Prins was a remarkable figure – player, organizer and a fine writer. He was also an exceptionally strong-principled, some would say downright awkward, character, who did not suffer fools, and was quick to take offence. Hans Ree's obituary in New In Chess 2000/1 brings to life a truly remarkable chessboard character.

Scorn for the barbarians

Hans Ree

Lodewijk Prins was born on January 27, 1913 and died on November 11, 1999. He was a grandmaster, a journalist, a writer of many chessbooks, an international arbiter, the organizer of some splendid tournaments, a campaigner for players' rights, as well as a charming man with a keen sense of justice. So keen indeed that in the course of his career he fell out, sometimes temporarily but often for the rest of his life, with the greater part of Dutch chess society. Hans Ree was one of the many who incurred his wrath.

We had not been on speaking terms for almost 30 years, since 1970. Is it right, therefore, that I should now write his obituary? Maybe not, but then, who else would do it? Most of his contemporaries are gone. I knew him well, at the time when we were not yet enemies. And I continued to like him afterwards, although he had stopped liking me. And anyway, he put his mark on the period in which I was most involved in chess. So let's go ahead and try to describe the chess life of a remarkable and difficult man.

Lodewijk Prins learned to play chess at the age of four, about 10 years later he enrolled in the *Verenigd Amsterdams Schaakgenootschap*, the strongest chess club in the Netherlands. At the age of 18 he plunged with relish into international chess, when he played his first international tournament, the Hastings Premier Reserves of 1931/32.

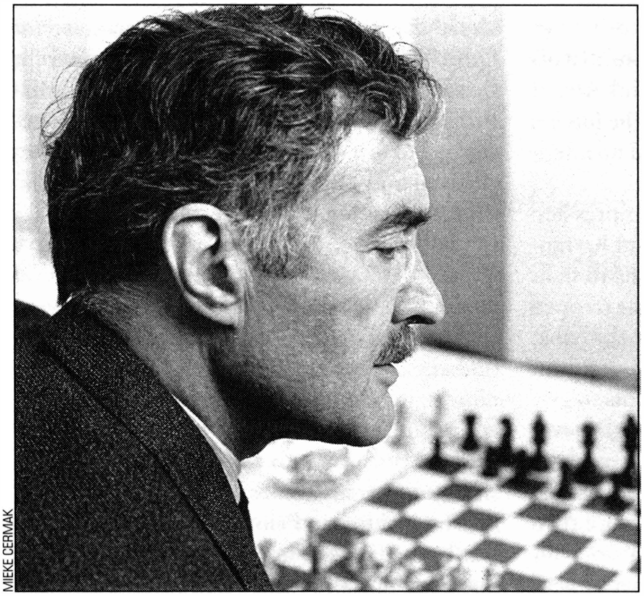
With the exception of Euwe and Landau, the Dutch masters of the pre- and postwar periods were not great travellers. They couldn't be, because they were amateurs who had little time for tournaments abroad. Prins wasn't a chess professional either, but he was better than his Dutch colleagues in managing to combine his work, often in journalism, with chess, and up until the early '50s he was the most active Dutch chess master after Euwe. He liked to travel, he liked to be abroad, and there was always a slightly un-Dutch aspect to his general appearance; a tall man, impeccably dressed, with a well-trimmed beard or moustache and with the poise of the man of the world, a rare and colourful bird in the land of heavy footsteps and plodding speech.

Wild fantasy

In the early '30s his style was characterised as 'a strange mixture of wild fantasy, masterful combinations and solidly handled endgames'. The journal of the Dutch chess federation commented on one of his games that, strange as it might seem, neither of the players had made an illegal move on the way to the weird diagram position after nine moves.

Prins would never change his style. He not only didn't know the fashionable openings, he didn't *want* to know them, and if by accident he found himself in an orthodox position, he would handle it in a way all his own, contemptuous of what he called 'the wisdom of the scribes'.

Strangely enough, the variation that got his name, ♘a6 against White's ♕b3 in the Grünfeld Defence, is quite common now. But when he played it, it was literally meant to be an eccentric move: not ♘c6, the common plodder's move, but ♘a6, away from the centre.


MIEKE CERMAK

Lodewijk Prins, ever contemptuous of 'the wisdom of the scribes'.

How is it possible that he often had such tremendous scores against weaker players? They are attracted to the light, he would say. What really happened is that his eccentric style forced his opponents to use their own head from the very earliest moments, which is not to everyone's liking.

Barbarians

Not counting Munich 1936, which was an unofficial Olympiad not sanctioned by FIDE, Stockholm 1937 was his first Olympiad. From then on he would play them all, till Siegen 1970, when he was left out of the Dutch team. The word 'Olympiad', by the way, was anathema to Prins. Boundless was his scorn for the barbarians whose use of the word for a chess competition revealed their ignorance of the fact that to the Greeks the Olympiad was the four-year period between two Olympic Games. For Prins, our Olympiad always was 'the competition for the Hamilton Russell Cup.'

When war broke out in Europe during the Buenos Aires Olympiad in 1939, Prins was one of the players who seriously considered staying in Argentina. So did A.D. de Groot, another member of the Dutch team, later known for his book *Thought and Choice in Chess*, who was in Buenos Aires with his wife. In the end, De Ronde was the only member of the Dutch team that stayed behind. Building up a new life in Buenos Aires was not easy.

Europe was becoming a dangerous place for Prins to return to. He was Jewish, although he wouldn't agree with this description, for he did not consider himself so. For him, being Jewish was something one could shed, as others shed the Protestant or Catholic beliefs of their parents. As we know, the Nazis did not share this enlightened viewpoint.

During the first years of the German occupation of Holland it was still possible for Prins to play tournaments and a tour of simuls, but later he had to go into hiding.

He survived the war. Less than two weeks after the liberation he was already giving another simul, playing blindfold against Lt. Parker of the Canadian army, and the end of the year saw him in Hastings again, where he played in the main group this time, which was won by veteran Tartakower. With Hans Kmoch, Prins wrote the tournament book *Weerzien der Schaakmeesters* (Reunion of the chessmasters), which contained a long philosophical preface by Joop den Uyl, the later prime minister of the Netherlands.

A court case

Groningen 1946 was the first postwar supertournament. There were the Russians, headed by Botvinnik. Salo Flohr, now part of the Soviet contingent, Najdorf, Szabo, Denker, and Tartakower again. Of course Euwe took part, and one other Dutch player was invited: Lodewijk Prins. It should have been the tournament of his life. Never before had he been invited to a competition of such strength and he never would be again. But it was not to be.

Twenty-one invited players turned up. The organizers had only counted on 20. They considered inviting another player, thereby prolonging the event by two days, but this was unacceptable to the Soviet delegation.

One player had to go. Euwe apparently offered to withdraw, but this was unthinkable, of course. Who then? Surely not one of the foreign invitees. It had to be Prins, but he had no intention of withdrawing voluntarily.

The tournament book gives the impression that the dispute was solved in pleasant harmony. The Soviets offered to invite Prins to their next big international tournament if he stepped back now. According to the tournament book, Prins accepted this compromise. This account is misleading. It was not at all like Prins to give up his rights so easily. In fact, Prins would never play in a Soviet tournament. He went to court to sue the Groningen organizers and was awarded substantial damages, amounting to more than the first prize that Botvinnik had won.

Nevertheless he cannot have been happy with the outcome. The case caused a lot of bad feeling, as well as an estrangement between Euwe and Prins. This was only temporary though. When Euwe went to Moscow in 1948 to play in the World Championship tournament, Prins was part of the Dutch delegation.

And a year later, in 1949, he published his book about Capablanca, co-written with Euwe and in my opinion his finest work. Euwe's contribution is modest, it is basically Prins's book. And the original Dutch title is vintage Prins: *Het schaakphenomeen José Raoul Capablanca y Graupera 19 november 1888 - 8 maart 1942.*

A lifelong feud

Around 1950 Donner came into his life. These two big egos were bound to clash. The writing is already on the wall in the book of the great tournament of Amsterdam 1950, written by Euwe and Prins.

This was Prins's tournament. He did not take part in it himself but he had made it possible by establishing a foundation with a mission to bring big chess events to Amsterdam. In later years this foundation organised the 1954 Olympiad (at very short notice after Argentina had withdrawn) and the Candidates' tournament of 1956.

In the book of the Amsterdam tournament Prins wrote about the young Donner: 'If Donner were to go only half as far as he thinks he already is, great successes will be in store for him.' Then Prins goes on to praise Donner for the sensible but small-minded qualities that Prins proudly felt he was lacking himself. According to Prins, Donner knew the opening theory well and followed Euwe's methodical lessons. He tended to force his opponent to take the initiative, without becoming quite passive himself. 'Donner's chess is provocative and yet methodical. It cannot primarily be called inventive, but it is skilful, versatile, courageous and (unbelievably to those who have heard his pronouncements) on the whole quite controlled and sound.'

In early 1951, Donner and Prins played a short training match. Training for Donner, that is, who had to pay Prins. Donner won 4½-1½. But later that year, in the zonal tournament in Bad Pyrmont, Prins did much better than Donner and qualified for the Interzonal. This was also the year in which Prins had his greatest tournament success when he won Madrid 1951, starting with 9 out of 9 and finishing on 12½ out of 17, ahead of players like Herman Steiner, Pilnik and Bernstein.

At the Helsinki Olympiad of 1952, Van Scheltinga played on first board, Prins on second and Donner on third. Although Donner made by far the best score, he was not universally popular in the team. The journal of the Dutch chess federation mentions 'a personal conflict between two members of the team where one of them could not refrain from trumpeting his joy about the other's loss in the tournament hall. Our team spirit suffered badly and it took days for us to recover.'

This happened when Smyslov had beaten Prins. The triumphant trumpeter was Donner, of course, who later told me that his behaviour, which was indeed scandalous, had been caused by Prins's outrageous insistence the day before that he had a much deeper understanding of chess than Smyslov. There may be some truth in this, for in his writings Prins has also made some quite disparaging remarks about Smyslov. Despite his many talents, he lacked the one for appreciating the style of a player like Smyslov.

East of Greenland

The first time I saw Lodewijk Prins in the flesh was in 1959. Dressed up as Saint Nicholas he played a simul against Amsterdam youngsters, alternating moves with his helper Black Peter, who was impersonated by John Bink, a strong player from Amsterdam. I was junior champion of Amsterdam and as such took part in the exhibition, but I don't remember the result.

'At sea, East of Greenland, May 1952'. Yes, this is our Lodewijk as we knew him.

I knew Prins from his chess column in the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*. They were signed Lod. Prins, with a facsimile signature. I found them very interesting. They were written in mock-archaic style, with lots of antiquated words that few of his readers would know. Now I suspect that Prins wasn't really familiar with these words either, and that he had been dredging through old dictionaries to find them. He was a *poseur*, always.

At the time I probably didn't notice the quaint style of his writings. For me this was the world of chess. I loved it.

While I was writing this, an obituary of Prins by Tim Krabbé appeared. Krabbé mentions that he was looking at an old chess book, translated by Prins. He had to smile when he read the translator's preface and its subscript: 'At sea, East of Greenland, May 1952.' Yes, this is our Lodewijk as we knew him.

To tell a knight from a bishop

Prins had a job as a journalist at the national press agency. He wrote his chess columns, he kept playing in the Olympiads and the occasional tournament, but he wasn't as active a player as he used to be. But then, in 1965, he took part in the Dutch championship, and tied for first place with Coen Zuidema and won the tie-break match. At the age of 52 he was Dutch champion for the first time.

His arch-enemy Donner, who had not taken part in the championship, took the occasion to vent his contempt for the state of Dutch chess. By attacking Prins he attacked the younger generation, who hadn't been able to keep Prins from winning the title.

'You can't tell a knight from a bishop,' Donner wrote, later explaining that he had meant that Prins wasn't able to appreciate the advantage of the bishop pair. He challenged Prins to a 10-game match, starting with a 4-0 advantage for Prins.

'Why not take it up?' I suggested to Prins. 'Not with this silly 4-0 clause of course, but a normal match. If you lose, OK, Donner is stronger. And you might even win, because Donner is psychologically at a disadvantage because of his antics.' There was a lot of money available for this match, much more than there would have been for a World Championship match at that time. Prins paused to think. 'You think I might win?' he said. But he didn't take up the challenge.

In 1973 Sosonko won the Dutch championship. Some time later there was a tournament in Amsterdam with four players, Sosonko, Timman, Donner and me, who were to play each other four times. Prins was quite angry about this tournament and wrote that it was an attempt to devaluate Sosonko's champion's title. It must have reminded him of Donner's challenge.

In 1965 Donner's attack on Prins was generally condemned. At the end of the year a society of Dutch sport journalists awarded him a prize for 'the most unsporting act of the year'. Nowadays they wouldn't notice us, whatever we did.

Out of the team

Come 1970, I met Lodewijk regularly, usually to play in one of the blitz tournaments that were held at his house, then in Amsterdam. At the time he had a job at the Technical University in

Twente, in the east of Holland. There he organized the Studium Generale, a series of lectures on general cultural and scientific subjects.

I had almost finished my mathematical studies in Amsterdam and Prins persuaded me to have a job interview in Twente at the Department of Logic. I could see the value, from his point of view, of having another chess player in Twente, but I didn't really want a job and certainly not in the east of Holland. As he was a persuasive man, I did go to Twente for the interview, but nothing came of it.

Then came the Siegen Olympiad. For the first time since 1937 Prins was not selected onto the team. But he turned out to be present in Siegen. I went up to him to say hello, but he brusquely turned away, making clear that he didn't want to speak to me. At the time I was quite surprised.

After the Olympiad we found out that Prins had sent a complaint to the Dutch chess federation against supposed irregularities during the selection procedure. To what extent was he right?

In the early stages, one of the selectors had solved a 2-2 voting deadlock by voting for himself, against young Timman. This was not against the rules but certainly not a model of fair procedures. On the other hand, it did not affect Prins's position. Some players didn't want to go to Siegen, so Timman was invited anyway, but he refused. Then, at a certain point Hartoch was selected to the team instead of Prins. This may or may not have been wise, but it gave no reasonable grounds for complaint.

But there was something else. Five players were selected. Bouwmeester, the federation coach, would be non-playing captain. If a sixth player had been selected, it would have been Prins.

At that point we – i.e. the selection committee and the team – decided to make Bouwmeester playing captain, thereby completing the team to six players. We thought it was in the best interest of the team and it may well have been. Bouwmeester was generally considered stronger than Prins and in fact in Siegen he made a fine score of 6 out of 7. But our decision had an unfortunate side-effect. We were paid for playing and now the money was to be divided by six people instead of seven. The extra money did not amount to much, but in the eyes of Prins it had been our motive to keep him off the team.

Exile

The Dutch chess federation rejected Prins's complaint. Prins cut off all relations with the federation board and refused to play for a Dutch team as long as the matter had not been settled to his satisfaction. He wrote articles and allowed himself to be interviewed about incompetent board members who were easy victims of corrupt and unscrupulous chess players. Then I wrote an article attacking Prins.

Now, 30 years later, I do not enjoy reading this article. Its tone is shrill, and my attempts at light-heartedness fall flat. It was written in the bad style that comes from genuine anger. A week later I retracted my article, writing that it would have been better had it not appeared.

This was not for the stylistic reasons just indicated, but because of a silly move that the leaders of the chess federation had made during that week.

Prins had cut off all relations with them. Now they cut off relations with him. Prins did not want to play for a Dutch team anymore. Now the federation announced that he wouldn't be invited anyway. My polemic, which seemed innocent at the time of writing, could now be interpretated as support for the boycott of a player by the federation, which was the last thing I wanted.

Normally in a case like this the players would have joined hands to force the federation to correct its error. But how to campaign for someone who would have nothing to do with us? And what to campaign for? For reinstating Prins as eligible for a Dutch team? But that was exactly what Prins himself did not want. He wanted our heads, and *that* we could not campaign for.

In later years new people joined the board of the federation. They wrote letters to Prins seeking a reconciliation. These letters were never answered or even opened. Till the end of his life Prins would never speak to anyone who had been in the selection committee or the team for Siegen 1970. I had been in both, and I had written that article. In the Dutch chess world Prins became a kind of self-appointed exile.

Newspapers

Another unpleasant thing happened to him around that time. In 1970 two newspapers merged, the *NRC* from Rotterdam and the *Algemeen Handelsblad* from Amsterdam. Their chess columnists were Prins and Orbaan. One of them had to go. Prins's column was livelier, but the newspaper editors decided that Orbaan should stay, probably on the grounds that he was financially dependent on his chess work, whereas Prins had a university job.

About 10 years later Prins lost his other column, the one in *Het Parool*, which I had been reading since I was a child. He was replaced by Hartoch, which must have evoked unpleasant memories of Siegen 1970.

Why did they take this column away from him? There is a story that Prins, who was assistant arbiter at the World Championship match between Karpov and Kortchnoi in Baguio City in 1978, had written an eye-witness report on the match and dropped it in a Baguio mailbox, with the result that it arrived at the newspaper months after the match was finished. I do not believe this story. Prins was eccentric but no fool, and he had been a professional journalist for many years. It seems more likely that *Het Parool*, which at that time made a misguided and unsuccessful attempt to reach the most uneducated segments of the public, no longer had any use for a chess columnist who displayed his erudition by literary quotes and the use of archaic words and expressions.

The end of this column also meant the end of an interesting experiment. Within FIDE, Prins had made efforts to establish a copyright on games, not to make money for FIDE, of course, which is the intention nowadays, but for the players. He gave a good example himself by securing that players who had a game printed in his column were paid for it. A small sum, but the idea, of course, was for other media to follow.

Repeat please

In 1982, at the FIDE congress in Luzern, Prins received the title of grandmaster for his lifetime achievements. Donner was there as a journalist, reporting mainly on the Olympiad, but this was an occasion he had to comment on: 'The list with the newly proposed grandmasters was read out, and as if in a dream I suddenly heard 'Prins'. 'Repeat, please,' I shouted, almost out of my senses, but I had heard correctly: 'Prins, Lodewijk,' repeated the European Vice-President. The last thing I remember was that I slowly slid from my chair and ended up under the table.

When I came to again, I was laid stretched out on the green table-cloth.' (J.H.Donner: *The King*)

Prins made good use of his title. When the GMA was founded later, he became a member and took part in the tournaments that served as qualifiers for the Grand Prix events. These tournaments, Moscow 1989 and Palma de Mallorca 1989, were very nice tournaments in themselves.

Table talk

In Palma de Mallorca there were quite a lot of Dutch men and women grandmasters. We used to eat at one big communal table. Only Prins and his wife were eating at a separate table. Not because he wanted to isolate himself, but because he couldn't sit at one table with me. Sometimes Fenny Heemskerk, out of the goodness of her heart, joined the Prinses, but the situation was still awkward.

I had heard a story about a small dinner party during one of the Interpolis tournaments in Tilburg. There was Prins and there was Jan Sorgdrager, the tournament doctor. They had been friends in the past, but at the time they were no longer on speaking terms. This was awkward for both of them, and also for the other people at the dinner table. Someone proposed that the two normalise their relationship for the time of the dinner and then continue their quarrel. For the general good this was accepted. Prins and Sorgdrager had a pleasant chat about the good old days. So pleasant that Sorgdrager tried to continue the conversation after they had stood up from their table. But no way. Prins stood firm. Dinner was over, the quarrel was resumed.

I suggested to Fenny Heemskerk that she should propose something like this. Couldn't Prins and I be pseudo-reconciled for the period of the tournament and then fall out again? Prins considered the proposal earnestly. The Dutch had a big table. We could keep our distance and we wouldn't have to talk to each other at all. After serious thinking he refused.

A touch of mildness

As far as I know, the last tournament Prins played in was the 1993 Cattolica Open, when he was 80 years old. He scored 50 percent. I kept seeing him at the opening ceremonies of Dutch tournaments, but we didn't speak to each other, of course. Yet I was glad when a friend of the Prins family told me a story suggesting that there had been a moment when principles had given way to mildness. I think it was in 1993, on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

On the doorstep of Prins's house stood the president elect of the Dutch chess federation, Cor Goldschmeding, carrying a bunch of flowers. A daring step, but what else to do? Letters from the federation to Prins were not opened, nor would he speak to board members on the phone.

But what should Prins do now? Goldschmeding had nothing to do with the events of 1970 and 1971. In fact, he was a problemist who had never been involved in the quarrels of the players. He was acting as an interim president who in his ripe old age had taken the job for just a few months to help the federation out of a hole. He was as innocent as a representative of the Dutch chess federation could be in the eyes of Prins.

His principles demanded that he send Goldschmeding away, but Prins couldn't bring himself to do it. He let him in, on the condition that he would enter the house as a friend and not as a representative of the federation. He accepted the flowers. They had a short and friendly chat. Then Goldschmeding left.

'Ah, Lodewijk, such beautiful flowers!' exclaimed his wife when she came home. 'But why did you throw them into the dustbin?'

One effect of FIDE's decision to introduce a regular knockout world championship was to open the title to a much larger number of players. Andy Warhol's dream of everybody enjoying fifteen minutes of fame had suddenly become a real possibility in the chess world. The first of what Kasparov infamously dismissed as 'tourists' to seize his chance at the world championship was Alexander Khalifman, who triumphed in the Las Vegas knockout in 1999. That in turn led to an invitation to Linares the following year, where he won the following fine game in a topical variation of the Grünfeld Defence. An extensive piece of analytical work, but, mind you, this is only an abridged version of the original (which appeared in all its glory in New In Chess Yearbook 55).

NOTES BY

Alexander Khalifman

GI 4.14
Alexander Khalifman
Peter Leko
Linares 2000 (8)

My January match against Peter was a disaster for me. I didn't manage to find enough time and money (sorry, Kirsan Nikolayevich, I only got my Las Vegas prize-money on 30-12-1999 – maybe just in time to celebrate Y2K with caviar and champagne, but rather late to invest into the preparation for an event scheduled to start on 2-1-2000) to prepare myself properly – but who cares? At least now I know for sure that playing a match against a well-prepared and motivated 2700 player, armed with an opening preparation consisting only of some tricky lines in the Grünfeld as White and 'let's see what is going to happen' as Black, is just hopeless. So in order to avoid the massive hammering widely predicted for me in Linares ('chamber of horrors' as one of my e-mail friends wrote to me), I really had to do something in the remaining one and a half months. Problem #1 was obviously finding a playable opening system (on a Linares level, that is) for Black against 1.e4, as all my so-called 'repertoire' systems have brought me nothing but trouble recently. I took this problem seriously and wanted to start my studies by checking some old books.

In the usual chaos I found a rather old notebook. For the younger readers: I do not mean a portable computer, but a number of sheets of paper bound together. I found some opening lines there that I had analysed by myself or with some friends of mine during 1984-1989. I'm not sure I have the right to name those who were doing this titanic work together with me in full, but thanks a lot anyway, Boris, Alexey, Vladimir – it was a great time! There was a strange nostalgic feeling when I saw the myriads of lines written down in this notebook. I was both curious and sceptical about the substance and quality of these analytical works – I actually expected 90% of the lines to be tactically unsound – nobody had heard of Fritz in those days and *errare humanum est*. Can one imagine my shock when the accuracy check with the help of modern equipment proved the opposite? Oh, my goodness, how fanatical and naive we were – everyone looking for 'a bright future'.

Alexander Khalifman in Linares, 2000. Armed with a few sheets of paper, bound together – what we used to call a 'notebook' – he felled Leko's Grünfeld.

What happened then? Nothing special – just months and years of never-ending open tournaments in which the opening secrets from my old notebook could hardly be useful. So up to January 2000 it had been buried in the usual chaos of my study. Sorry, dear readers, this story is getting too long – OK, let's play some moves...

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6

In the last round Peter played 2...c5 against Vladimir Kramnik. Although it's hard to believe that 'my old notebook secret' made him uncomfortable in his favourite Grünfeld, it still means something.

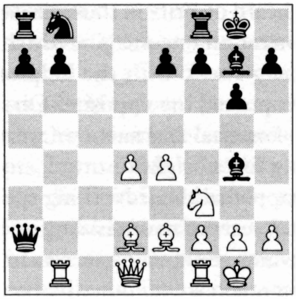
3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘c3 d5 5.cxd5

Somehow, after finding the old notebook, I was really impressed by the depth of analysis in some lines with 5.cxd5 & 8.♖b1 – so I decided to try them out. I can foresee the logical question: it was my second Grünfeld game in Linares; why didn't I try it in Round 2 against Mr. Kasparov? The answer is fairly simple and honest: I have some reasons to think that while the opening knowledge of Peter Leko and the other 'Linares players' differs greatly from that of 'mere mortals' (the old notebook just brought me some steps closer to them), the opening knowledge of 'Garry The Greatest' is in a different league again. So I didn't want to check his analysis – I just wanted to play a game.

5...♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.♖b1

So this is one of the many positions thoroughly analysed in the old notebook. I'm sorry, but I would prefer to omit the analysis of the most critical opening lines for now – I am really hopeful that some of them may come in handy in the future.

8...0-0 9.♗e2 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕xa2 12.0-0 ♗g4



Although this move only became the centre of public attention after the games Gurevich-Ivanchuk and Gelfand-Ivanchuk from the Manila Interzonal in the summer of 1990, we were sure from the very beginning that this was one of the most critical lines in the entire variation. So it was one of the main objects of analysis. Still, some other 'old notebook' lines have something to add to the 'official' theory as well.

13.♗g5 h6 14.♗e3

The 14.♗h4 lines are also very interesting, but just too weird for Linares.

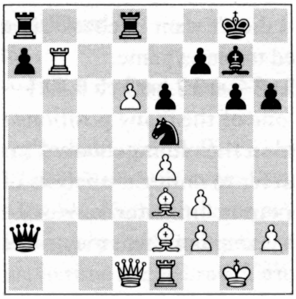
14...♘c6 15.d5 ♘e5

This is one of the key moments in this game. Although the text is by no means refuted in the game, the alternatives 15...♗xf3, 15...♘a5 and 15...♖fd8 took a lot more pages in the old notebook. Even the unnatural 'computer move' 15...♘d8?! was analysed with great accuracy.

16.♖xb7 e6 17.d6

Right from this moment on, this pawn will become the key factor of the position. Black has many tactical possibilities, as his pieces are rather active. But if White manages to ward off all temporary dangers, his d-pawn alone should be worth the full point.

17...♖fd8 18.♖e1 ♗xf3 19.gxf3



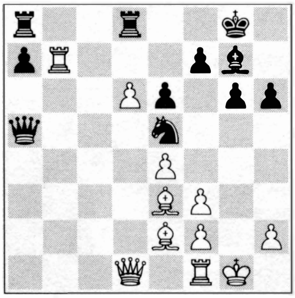
19...♕a5

After the brilliant refutation by Boris Gelfand of 19...♕a3 (19...♕a3 20.f4 ♖xd6 21.♕c1! ♕xc1 22.♖xc1 ♘c6 23.e5 ♘d4 24.♖cc7!± Gelfand-Kamsky, Dos Hermanas 1996) this tactical move (the prize-winning novelty of *Informator* 68) was found by Miguel Illescas in order to rehabilitate the entire line. When I saw the game Lautier-Illescas for the first(?) time I was very impressed, just like everyone else. Despite the strange feeling of *déjà vu*, I took it seriously and tried to find the refutation – with no special success; just some playable ideas, no more.

So imagine my shock when I was suddenly confronted with some pages of analysis on 19...♕a5 written by my own hand and dating back no less than 10 years.

20.♖f1

In the 'stem game' Lautier was caught by surprise and preferred to repeat moves: 20.♗d2 ♕a2 21.♗e3 ♕a5 22.♗d2 ♕a2 23.♗e3 and a draw was agreed in Lautier-Illescas, Wijk aan Zee 1997.



20...♗f8

20...♖d7 is another try. Black wants to block the d-pawn and exchange the active rook. This move, however, has its drawbacks, too. The d-pawn is no longer under attack, so White has some time to regroup his pieces whilst retaining the advantage: 21.♖xd7 ♘xd7 22.f4 ♖b8 23.♕c2 ♕d8 24.e5 g5 25.♕e4 gxf4 26.♗xf4± (this is one of five lines that Khalifman gives to support this assessment – ed.).

21.d7 ♕a2 22.♗b5

22.♖e1 ♕a5 23.♖f1 ♕a2 24.♗b5 a6 25.♗d4 ♗g7 26.♗xe5 ½-½ was Kramnik-Kasparov, Linares 1998.

22...a6

So Black is going for the pawn, as 23.♗a4 seems to be the only critical answer. A little detail: the square b6 is no longer protected, so Black should always be ready to sacrifice the exchange now. Everything will depend on the question of whether Black's dark-square counterplay will be enough. (Several lines after 22...♗g7 followed –ed.)

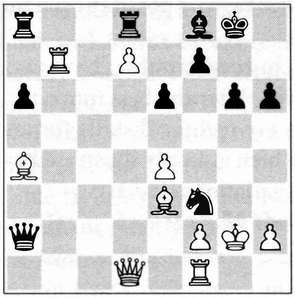
23.♗a4!

This pawn sacrifice is White's only option if he wants to play for a win. 23.f4 axb5 24.fxe5 ♕a6 25.♖c7 ♕a5 26.♖b7 ♕a6 is equal.

23...♘xf3+

A pawn is a pawn, and even more importantly: White's king is getting more exposed now. (Khalifman spends half a page on the alternatives 23...♘c4 and 23...♕a3 –ed.).

24.♔g2

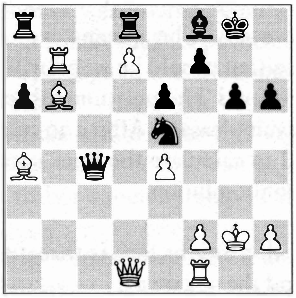


24...♘e5

Technically speaking, this move is the real novelty. It has a good strategic basis – the knight controls many important squares and attacks the pawn d7 from e5. However, 24...♘h4+ is a serious alternative, as the check saves a tempo. The question 'Which is better: 24...♘e5 or 24...♘h4+ ?' is mainly of theoretical interest. According to my 'old notebook' lines accurate play yields White good winning chances in both cases and no losing prospects at all. So I would be rather surprised if this position were to arise again in future practice. After 24...♘h4+, 25.♔h3 was played in Haba-Skytte, Cappelle la Grande 2000. Black failed to find any special counter-resources and lost quickly. After my game against Peter I was asked in the press-centre if I knew this brand-new game. Well, I knew it. As a matter of fact, I knew even more. I couldn't imagine myself being so brave as to move my king to h3 – ...g6-g5 belongs to Black's plan anyway, so knight h4 would hardly be in danger. The white king right opposite on h3 might become the target of a mating attack. Fortunately the quieter retreat to h1 is good enough for White. (As he goes on to demonstrate on two pages crammed with variations – ed.)

25.♗b6 (Half a page is dedicated to the lesser alternative 25.♖e1 – ed.)

25...♕c4?!



Surprise, surprise! I felt I was going to win the game without playing at all – it sometimes happens to the other Linares guys, especially the big shots, so why shouldn't it happen to me? Unlike the alternatives, the text-move was not extensively analysed in the old notebook. It looks active and logical, but in the old notebook it was rejected with the general assessment: 'Black's only chance is counterplay against White's weakened king – so if White manages to swap the queens without losing the d-pawn, he should usually be close to winning'.

(This comment is followed up by an extensive presentation of the alternatives 25...♕a3, 25...♗e7, 25...♗g7 and 25...g5 – ed.)

26.♕d4!

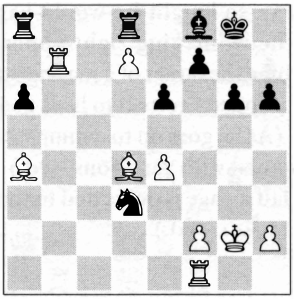
The key move. Otherwise Black has good counterchances. After the text move the queen swap is practically forced and in a higher sense White's position is technically won. 26.f3 ♘d3 27.♗xd8 ♖xd8 gives Black compensation.

26...♕xd4

26...♕e2 is the only way to keep the queens on the board. But it is fairly easy to refute: 27.♕xe5 ♕g4+ 28.♕g3 ♕xe4+ 29.♕f3 ♕xa4 30.♖c1! and the threat of 31.♖c8! is decisive.

27.♗xd4 ♘d3

If 27...♘c4 28.♗f6 ♘d6 29.♖c7 ♘xe4 30.♗xd8 ♖xd8 31.♖c8 ♗e7 32.♖b1 and White wins.



So, here we are. The queens are exchanged and the position should be won for White. The question is how? The positional threat of 28...♘c5 is very unpleasant. After a 30-minute think I managed to calculate the lines carefully and found the only solution.

28.♗c6!

Very logical: a knight fork is threatened and I can't defend the square c5.

28.♖c7 is not good due to some trivial reasons: 28...♗d6 29.♖c4 ♘e5 30.♗xe5 ♗xe5 is equal; Equally insufficient was 28.♖d1 ♘c5 29.♗xc5 ♗xc5 30.♖c1 ♗d6 (30...♗d4 31.♖bc7±) 31.♖b3 ♔f8 32.♖bc3 ♔e7 33.♖c8 ♖b8=, or 30.♖c7 ♗b6 (30...♗b4 31.♖dc1+–) 31.♖c6 ♗a5 with a drawn position, or 28.♖bb1 ♘c5 29.♗c6 ♘b7=.

28...♘c5

What else? Otherwise I'll just win the exchange on d8 and then take all my rooks to c8. It might take some time but no concentration at all. (This assessment is supported by half a page of examples – ed.)

29.♖c7 ♗d6

If 29...♖ab8 30.♗f6 ♗d6 31.♗xd8 ♖xd8 32.♖c8 ♗e7 33.♖b1 and White wins.

30.♗xc5 ♗xc7 31.♗xa8 ♖xa8

Or 31...♖xd7 32.♗e3 winning.

32.♗e7 ♖d8!

Once more Peter finds the best resource (32...f6 33.♖c1 ♔f7 34.♖xc7 ♔xe7 35.♖c8 or 32...♗a5 33.♖c1 are both easy wins for White). Now the natural 33.♗xd8 could be a serious mistake, as after ♔f8-e7 it's hard to see how White can reach more than a theoretically drawn ending of ♖+3♙ v ♗+4♙. At this point I got slightly nervous – in the Budapest match I had missed the win in the ending ♖+♙ v ♗+♙...

33.♖d1!

White wants to play e5, when Black's king will remain in the cage forever, whereas its white counterpart would be able to choose any route across the board (to c6, for example). So the answer is more or less forced.

33...f5 34.♗xd8 ♗xd8 35.exf5 gxf5 36.♖d6 ♔f7 37.♖xa6 ♔e7

Here we are. White is an exchange up, but the win is not obvious even now. So I had to calculate everything once more, up to the winning pawn ending. This pawn ending brought me some confidence: as old masters used to say: 'A winning pawn ending is much better than a mate in 4'.

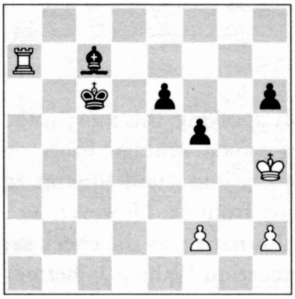
38.♔g3!

38.♖a7?! is the kind of move which can be played automatically, especially in time-trouble. Fortunately I wasn't in time-trouble: after 38...♔d6 39.♔g3 h5 40.♔f4 ♗f6 White's win is anything but easy, or possibly even impossible.

38...♗c7+

Peter *was* in time-trouble, however. Now the game is over. After the best move 38...♔xd7 he could test my technical skills for another few moves. (Which is amply illustrated with another page of variations – ed.)

39.♔h4 ♔xd7 40.♖a7! ♔c6



Finally I could relax while checking my calculations of the pawn ending. I did it again and again, which caused my team (my second GM Alexey Lugovoi and 'the specialist' ICCF-GM Gennady Nesis) to feel a bit uncomfortable. Anyway, when you're so close to beating a player who hasn't been defeated in his last 60 games, some extra accuracy can do no harm.

41.♖xc7+! ♔xc7 42.♔h5

This clinches the issue.

42...e5 43.♔xh6 ♔d6 44.♔g5 ♔e6 45.h4 f4 46.h5 f3 47.♔g4

Black resigned.

Epilogue

The morning before I left St.Petersburg for Linares was extremely chaotic. E-mails, phone calls, urgent matters to look after... I packed in a hurry – and when I unpacked my luggage in Linares – oh, Lord!!! – the old notebook was not there. I don't need to tell you that my entire opening preparation for Linares was based on the 'old notebook' lines and unfortunately I didn't have enough time to copy most of them to my new notebook (now I do mean my Pentium-III portable computer). For a moment I was overcome by panic – well, I had thoroughly checked these lines, but yet I didn't know most of them by heart – so 'How are you, Mr. Khalifman? Out of your opening preparation again? Welcome to Linares – your chamber of horrors'. I started producing some crazy ideas like calling home and asking my wife to send this old notebook to Linares by express post, but then I suddenly stopped. I had left the old notebook at home, but who told me that these lines were worth Linares? Who told me that Linares was worth these lines? It's true – these analyses might be able to bring me some points there. But would it change in my life?

Speaking from a materialistic point of view, playing well or badly in an event in which the lion's share of the prize-fund is used for the appearance fee of the Greatest Chess Player of All Time doesn't make much of a difference – in the World Championship it does. Is a good or bad result there important for an invitation to the next Linares tournament? Hard to believe – the invitations to those super-events don't depend on your results. Some months ago I read a funny article in some Russian newspaper. Here is an exact quote: 'The traditional super-tournament of Linares will take place in February 2000. In accordance with the demands of World Champion Garry Kasparov, the six highest-rated players were invited to play there'. Then Alexander Morozevich declined the invitation and somehow I was invited. Would a good or bad result in Linares reflect positively or negatively on my image in the chess media? Most probably neither – the words written about me by this or that author after Las Vegas didn't depend on my play or my results, but mainly on the author's membership of this or that fan-club.

When I clearly understood all the above facts, I decided that it was a good sign – let my old notebook sleep in peace at home till the next World Championship (or at least an event with a good prize-fund that is not made up on some other player's whim). I felt fine then – in a couple of games I even tried the old notebook lines – when these lines were not of critical importance. So let's wait for the next World Championship. Will it happen – who knows? Chess players can only hope (or pray if someone is able to). If the worst were to happen and the chess world were to revert back to the pre-FIDE days of chaos, I will probably publish these lines step by step on www.gmchess.com. Time will tell...

Chess history has its fair share of personal tragedies, and that number was augmented in 1999, when top Latvian GM, Lembit Oll, jumped to his death in the early hours of the morning. Oll's tragic fate inspired Genna Sosonko to write one of his most moving essays, recalling the eerily similar death of the Latvian talent, Alvis Vitolins.

The jump

Genna Sosonko

'That will probably be Alvis', said Tal, hearing the bell and tearing himself away from the analysis to open the front door. 'We agreed yesterday to play a few blitz games.' The time was the summer of 1968. The place was Riga, Tal's flat, where I was helping him to prepare for his Candidates' semi-final match with Kortchnoi.

Into the room came a very tall young man, leaning forward somewhat with a slightly rocking gait, a rather sullen appearance, with a high retreating forehead and a vacant stare directed somewhere into space. It was Alvis Vitolins.

We were already acquainted. Several years earlier at some tournament in Leningrad we had played a game. In an initially equal ending with opposite-colour bishops Vitolins had developed a strong initiative and it appeared that things would turn out badly for me. In addition I was short of time and I grew very nervous. At this point Vitolins offered a draw: he did not want to play on my time trouble. After stopping the clocks, he began demonstrating some far from obvious variations, where Black would hold the position.

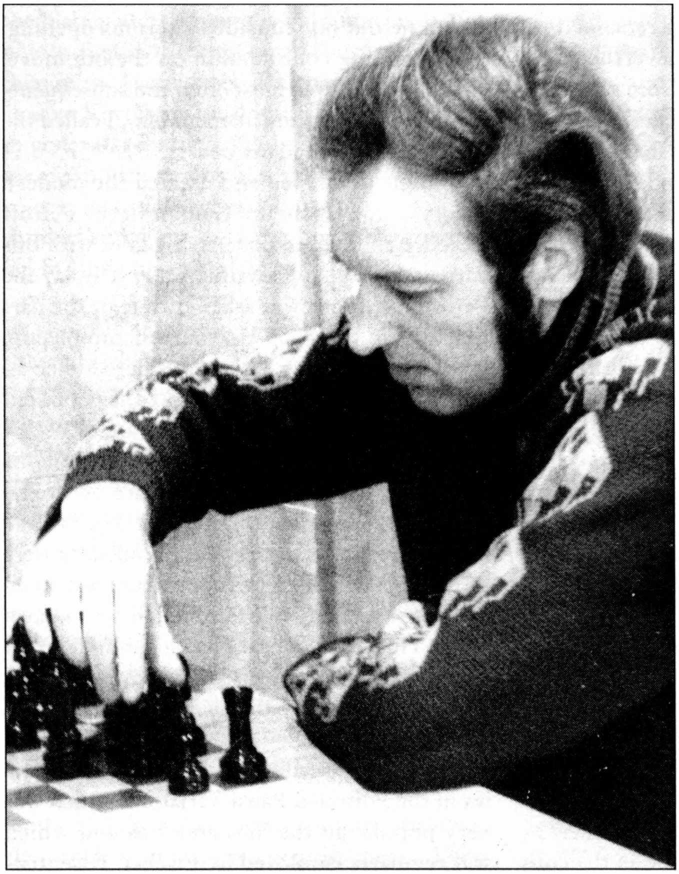
That day Tal and Vitolins played blitz until late in the evening, as occurred on other days too. Tal, one of the greatest experts of his time at lightning play, won more frequently, of course, but often, normally with white, Alvis would succeed with brilliant attacks, the outlines of which I still recall. It was then that I really understood what the superb tactician Tal had in mind when, in analysis, he would sacrifice material for the initiative and become animated: 'Well, now let's play like Vitolins...'

Alvis Vitolins was born on 15th June 1946 in Sigulda, in the environs of Riga. The boy was nine years old when his father took him to his first trainer, Felix Tsirtsenis. Vitolins' talent was obvious and within a few years he was to become one of the strongest juniors in the USSR.

'He was the best of us', recalls Yury Razuvaev. 'Alvis always shone in the All-Union junior competitions. It was no accident that he was also one of the first to become a master. Already then Vitolins had a very subtle sense of equilibrium in chess. When it was disturbed, a piece initiative in his hands became a decisive factor.

'He was very tall and we gave him the nickname 'Dlinny' (lanky). There was something special in Alvis – the kind of biological phenomenon of a winner, of a person who had a different perception of chess. It is probable that something similar was felt by the opponents of Fischer, to whom, incidentally, he was similar in his entire appearance. But even then it was already apparent that he was naïve, unusual, and absorbed in himself.

'A typical scene of those years: at a junior training session Vitolins, the chess hope of Latvia, is having a fight with Vooremaa, the Estonian player. One can imagine what kind of feelings they experienced towards Russia and the Soviet Union. The physically stronger Vi-



Vitolins' motto was 'the initiative at any price' – a player very much in the Latvian tradition.

tolins pins his opponent to the bed with a pillow and the loser begs for mercy. The demand of the winner: you will sing the national anthem of the Soviet Union in Russian.'

Vladimir Tukmakov calls the chess potential that Vitolins had 'fantastic': 'Because of his sharp, vivid, combinative style Vitolins was called the second Tal. For him chess was everything, which also made him similar to Tal. He was uncommunicative, as though all wrapped up in himself. Although I played him several times, I doubt whether we exchanged more than a sentence or two after a game. The great hopes expected of him were not realized. It became clear that he would not become a great player, and this happened before he was thirty – he quickly burned out. Of course, even after this everyone knew that Vitolins was very dangerous, and that you could not relax against him, but his time had already passed...'

Indeed, Vitolins' entire biography can be summed up in a few lines. Initially, there were enormous hopes and successes in junior competitions. Successes, which somehow came to nothing. He did not even become a grandmaster, and the number of international tournaments that he played, all within the Soviet Union, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In Latvia, however, Alvis shone. Seven times he won the Championship of the Republic and several times he won Baltic tournaments. And that, really, is all. In the late '80s and early '90s, when it finally became possible to travel abroad, he played in some open tournaments in Germany, but he was already in his forties and his best years were obviously behind him. He completed two courses at the German Department of the University Philological Faculty in Riga and he spoke German quite well. All his life Vitolins lived with his parents and he was never married. These are the external contours of his biography. The fact is that he had no other life apart from that associated with games, tournaments, and endless analyses.

How did he play? Vitolins' motto was the initiative. The initiative at any price. The creation of positions where two pawns, or even one pawn, for a piece are sufficient compensation, because the pieces remaining on the board develop a furious energy. This becomes the decisive factor in the evaluation of the position, more even than the vulnerability of the enemy king. Very often after such a sacrifice, amazing things would happen: the positional advantage would inexorably increase, the opponent's superior forces would lose their coordination, and the attack would strengthen with every move.

It stands to reason that the king remained his target, but the main aim was nevertheless to extract the maximum energy from the pieces. Such a manner of play is altogether typical of the Latvian school of chess. Obvious in Tal and Vitolins, it can be observed today in Shirov, Shabalov and Lanka. A distinguishing feature of this style is the creation of positions where both kings are under threat, everything is hanging, and from one incorrect move the entire construction can collapse. It is for good reason that Shirov's book is entitled *Fire on Board*.

Like Shirov, Vitolins possessed good endgame technique, but he played hardly any lengthy, manoeuvring games. If in Napoleon's definition of war as 'a simple art, consisting entirely in action', we replace war with chess, we come close to Vitolins' perception of the game.

In the chess world people knew that if Alvis obtained his kind of position, he could win against anyone. But however striking Vitolins was as a player, in the first instance he was a tireless researcher of chess. His motto was 1.e2-e4! and wins! He followed the line of Vsevolod Rauzer, that remarkable researcher, with whose name is associated the development of many attacking systems in the theory of the game. Or, perhaps, the roots are even deeper, in the convictions of Philidor, who asserted that the player beginning the game should win with correct play. In all the openings he analysed for White, Vitolins tried to demonstrate not only an advantage, but a big advantage, if possible a decisive one.

In the words of Vladimir Bagirov: 'Starting in 1980, when I began holding training sessions with the Latvian team, Alvis came to me every Friday. Our lessons consisted in us playing blitz, five-minute. The winner was the first who gained ten points. Vitolins played every game as if it were the game of his life and he suffered terribly when he lost. He was a brilliant blitz player, in some way not inferior even to Tal. I sometimes beat him, but he won more often and by a bigger margin. In all the games where I was Black, we played the Alekhine Defence or the Caro-Kann. He prepared for these matches thoroughly and he developed his own ideas, trying to obtain a big advantage in the Caro-Kann, and altogether to refute the Alekhine Defence, which he did not consider a serious opening. The storming continuation on the 6th move, which he employed most often and subsequently introduced into tournament play, I called the Vitolins Variation in my book.'

Vitolins developed and created the modern theory of the Cochrane Gambit in the Petroff Defence and played dozens of games with this variation. 'Will you sacrifice on f7 if I play the Petroff?' Vitolins was asked by one of the participants in the 1985 Latvian Championship, who had prepared what he considered to be an improvement. 'Of course', came the confident reply. He won in a swift, crushing attack.

However, the main testing ground of his searchings was the Sicilian Defence, where he was a veritable generator of ideas. The favourite squares for his bishops in this opening were b5 and g5. Very often he dropped the bishop on b5 even if this square was controlled by a pawn on a6. He would develop his position in a fan-shape, often directing his knights to the squares d5, f5 and e6, where they were under attack of the enemy pawns.

He was responsible for numerous discoveries in the Poisoned Pawn Variation, which was very popular in the '60s and '70s and which was regularly employed by Fischer. Essentially, the entire theory of the major branch of this variation, involving a knight sacrifice on the 18th move and an attack with subsequent quiet moves, began with Vitolins. About another branch of the same variation, which he introduced into tournament play, he wrote an article for *New In Chess*, concluding it with the characteristic words: 'My experience as a chess analyst tells me that any, even the most thorough, analysis may have certain flaws. I just want to point out to the reader that even in a seemingly worn-out variation completely new ideas can be found. Truly chess has no limits!'

Vitolins was also responsible for several of the most aggressive continuations against the Polugaevsky Variation. Tal, who on many occasions made use of Alvis's help and advice, successfully employed these ideas in a match against the author of the variation himself, although he did not succeed in realizing them to the end. However, another idea of Vitolins in the Rauzer Variation (again the bold development of the bishop at b5!) brought Tal some important points, first in the Interzonal Tournament, and then in the Candidates' Tournament in a game against Kortchnoi in Montpellier 1985. Misha, in general, regarded Vitolins very touchingly, seeing in him an unfulfilled genius, which, of course, he was. He always spoke of him as a like thinker and successor. Vitolins was responsible for the idea of the pawn sacrifice b7-b5 in the 4.♕c2 variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence, and the variation with ♗b4+ followed by c7-c5 in the Bogo-Indian Defence was one that he first began to develop. At first sight the latter idea looks absurd: a pawn, with which the centre could have been attacked, voluntarily moves to the flank. On the other hand, tension is created on that part of the board, and, most important, an unusual position is reached where his rich imagination could display itself.

Very often, he dropped the bishop on b5, even if there was a black pawn on a6.

In the old days there was a simple attitude to the problem of improvement in chess. 'There are no particular subtleties in this game. If you are not aiming to become a professional player, you should only play as often as possible', wrote Schiffers in the *Shakhmatny Zhurnal* in 1894. However, in modern chess systematic training, the study of special literature and analysis became essential for raising the standard of play, although in chess genuine diligence consists not so much in working zealously as in working correctly. A truth, which is often forgotten by amateurs, trying to make progress in the game and not sparing time on improvement.

But what is meant by chess analysis, and how did Vitolins analyse? It is obvious that he was constantly in a state that is well known to anyone who has seriously studied chess. After several hours of evening analysis a position appears to be resolved, but a final verdict has not yet been reached at. It is somewhere close, but it slips away elusively. Night comes, you feel tired, and you realize that it would be best to put things off until tomorrow, but in desperation you continue seeking this tempo, and you check all the moves, approaching the start of the variation, and sometimes even the initial placing of the pieces. But if the truth dawns and the solution is finally found, you know that the joy of discovery will outweigh the fatigue of all the days, weeks and even months spent searching for that which you intuitively sensed from the very start. In his case, time played altogether no role and the reward was not prizes, money or rating points, but the process itself of immersion in chess.

Chess theory is like a snake, which grows and sheds its skin. A continuous renewal is taking place. But in contrast to a snake, in the theory of chess there is an ongoing process of returning to old variations that have gone out of fashion. They appear enriched with new ideas. Many notches on this line of research were made by Alvis Vitolins. His ideas left their mark, even if much of what he analysed or played now seems naïve or, after testing by time and computer, not altogether correct.

He was overflowing with ideas, and when playing he was not always able to make a realistic evaluation of the situation on the board. This along with his open dislike for defence and play in slightly inferior positions, was his obvious weakness. Lev Alburt and Yury Razuvaev, who played Vitolins many times, recall how they tried to play against him in classical style, with exaggerated strictness, knowing that at some point Alvis might be carried away by some spectacular move, or some brilliant, tempting, but not altogether correct combination, and would let the game slip out of control.

However, to understand fully the phenomenon of Alvis Vitolins, one has to know that he suffered from a severe mental derangement. Effectively from the very start, he was not so much battling against his opponent as against himself.

Zigurds Lanka knew Vitolins from the mid-70s, when he himself began playing regularly in the Latvian Championships: 'Alvis' junior trainer Tsirtsenis thought that already towards the end of his school days he was beginning to display symptoms of schizophrenia. This illness pursued Vitolins throughout his life. All the time he had to take strong drugs, which dulled his perception and made him play worse. He used to avoid taking them, in order to retain clarity of thought and reaction, but this led to breakdowns. At the board this displayed itself when in a perfectly normal, perfectly defensible position he would simply resign, if it was not to his liking. In life, being a wilful and direct person, he could even knock somebody out.

А. ВИТОЛИНЬШ
Я. КЛОВАНС

Vitolins (White), in play against fellow Latvian master, Janis Klovans.

'Not everyone was able to endure his daily regime. Since I was the youngest in the team, in all competitions outside Riga we were always put in the same hotel room. At night he would usually be awake, analysing some position on a magnetic chess set, dropping off to sleep only towards morning. He might not go to bed for two days, but then he would sleep for a whole twenty-four hours. He could almost always be found in the Riga Chess Club; he would be there for days on end. I played a mass of games with him, tournament games, with a shortened time control, or blitz. When playing Black I felt, as perhaps against no one else, that I was constantly under terrible pressure. Each move of his created some threat and carried a definite charge of energy; he would not allow me to play quietly. His play was a demonstration of colossal dynamics and excellent technique, based on classical, logical chess and good training.

'When I now see how Shirov analyses or when I play through the games of Anand and Kramnik, I am reminded of Alvis. Absolute penetration into the essence of the position and anticipation of events many moves ahead. This comes easily to very few.'

Tall, very big, with long side-whiskers, in his young years he resembled the famous American who was almost his namesake: Elvis. As he grew older his facial features became sharper, here and there deep lines appeared, his side-whiskers became even longer, and he came to look more like the skipper of an English cargo ship of the nineteenth century. And still in Vitolins' appearance one sensed something strange and languid. He was as though not of this world, with his inadequate, often unpredictable reactions and his strange laugh. In his youth this was not so marked, but with the years these features became ever more obvious. By nature he was honest, naïve and kind. The smile that sometimes stole over his face made him look child-like and defenceless – all his life Alvis essentially remained a big child. As often happens with this type of person, he was physically very strong. When the doctor advised him to take up some sport, he, an individualist by nature, acquired a seven-kilogram shot and every day threw it on his farmstead. He did this with passion, rejoicing over improvements in his results, and taking his personal record, so it is said, up to thirteen metres.

He did not have any close friends. He avoided people, especially strangers, and especially those who were not chess players. At tournaments he was often seen in the company of Karen Grigorian (1947-1989). Karen Grigorian's father was the outstanding Armenian poet Ashot Grashi and his mother was a professor of philology. Very intelligent and well-read, from childhood Karen could cite many poets from memory. His favourite image in literature was Lermontov's Demon, and, in painting, Vrubel's Demon. Karen grew up as a highly sensitive and vulnerable boy, with a subtle feeling for art. It is hard to say how his fate would have turned out, had he followed in the footsteps of his parents, but at the age of seven the boy became devoted to chess. He possessed a striking, versatile talent and was considered the chess hope of Armenia.

In the '70s Karen Grigorian regularly took part in the finals of the USSR Championship. Like Vitolins, he did not seem to belong to this world, perhaps not so morose as Alvis, but also strange, unusual, not like others.

It is curious that Karen studied for a time with Lev Aronin, an outstanding player and theoretician, who was also burdened with serious mental problems. One of the critical games in Aronin's chess career was his meeting with Smyslov in the 19th USSR Championship in 1951. It was adjourned in a position where practically any move would have led to a win for White. However, Aronin, who had a whole day for analysis, went into a pawn ending, which allowed his opponent a study-like way to save the game. Karen later remembered that whenever he called on him, Aronin would be sitting at that position, pensively moving the pieces about.

Like Vitolins, Karen Grigorian did not seem to belong to this world.

One of Karen's favourite questions was: 'What do you think, which tournament was stronger, Nottingham 1936 or the 1973 USSR Championship?' Karen asked it regularly, grasping the other person by the elbow and looking him in the eye. In that tournament in 1973, one of the strongest in the entire history of USSR championships, he played splendidly. By present-day standards Karen was a strong grandmaster. After winning two successive games in a USSR Championship or an international tournament, he would consider himself a genius and would readily set up a link: 'Yesterday I won against Tal. Of course, Tal is no longer World Champion, but he has a positive score against Fischer. What do you think about my chances in a match with Fischer?' The following day, after losing a game, he could become dejected and depressed, repeating that his own play was repulsive to him, that his life was of no use to anyone. He would begin talking about suicide, long before he became a patient at a psychiatric hospital and long before that final freefall jump from the highest bridge in Yerevan on 30th October 1989.

The friendship between Grigorian and Vitolins was not a friendship in the generally accepted sense of the word. Shut off from the other world, they simply understood each other, or, more correctly, trusted each other. They intuitively felt that the other was a kindred soul, who after a conversation with you does not go off and begins retelling its content with an ironic smile. And of course, in their world, chess, which they both loved selflessly, played the most important role.

Both Alvis Vitolins and Karen Grigorian were outstanding masters of blitz. While in tournament chess they were strong and dangerous, although uneven players, in lightning play they had few equals. This also applies to Lembit Oll (1966-1999), the Estonian grandmaster who possessed a rare memory and was a brilliant theoretician, a man of similar fate, who also suffered from a psychic disorder and in the same way voluntarily departed from this life. The explanation suggests itself. The time allotted for play in a classical game allows one to sink into thought, generating doubts and uncertainty. For them, with their sharp falls in mood and excitable nervous system, this served only as a stimulus for mistakes and oversights. Blitz, however, demands instant reactions, while psychology and self-reproach retreat into the background. Here, they obviously thrive on their great natural talent.

Any game of chess contains a wide range of emotions, with joys and vexations, great and small. These emotions accompany any type of creativity. But whereas in painting or literature it is possible to cross out, rewrite or change, in chess one movement of the fingers, communicated by the mind, is final. Often it can be repaired only by sweeping the wooden pieces off the board. Or you can castigate yourself, by hitting your head against a wall, or by rolling around on the floor, as one modern grandmaster does after losing a game.

It is a rare game that develops with the smooth accumulation of an advantage and its conversion into a point. But even in this case a player who is honest with himself knows what he was afraid of at a certain moment, what he was hoping for, and how he flinched after miscalculating a variation. Time and again, however, a game proceeds according to the following approximate pattern: slightly worse, clearly worse, a mistake by the opponent, joy, winning chances, time trouble, missed opportunities, draw. Such changes in mood and emotion occur both in professional and in amateur play, with the only difference that in the latter case these sharp peaks of ascents and descents can be seen several times.

A change of mood during the course of a tournament, although not in such an abrupt form as with Karen Grigorian, is also familiar to every player. 'Even the way you walk has changed', said the observant David Bronstein in January 1976 in Hastings after I had managed to win a couple of games in a row. This sort of emotional stress and sudden decline during a game or during a tournament, does not serve to strengthen the inner mental core. Chess at top level constantly shakes it, which can have far-reaching consequences, especially if this core is shaky or diseased. In no other type of sport does one encounter such a large number of peculiar people, engrossed in themselves and living in their own world. What attracts them, with their shaky, unstable psyche into this, by Nabokov's definition 'complex, delightful and useless art'? Or is it the other way round and is it chess that affects the psyche?

One does not have to turn to Vladimir Nabokov or Stefan Zweig. In the living gallery of chess of yesterday and today it is not difficult to find geniuses or unfulfilled geniuses among this type of people. 'Torre's first steps were those of a future world champion', wrote Emanuel Lasker at the start of the career of Carlos Torre (1905-1978), the highly talented Mexican player, who at a young age was forced to give up chess and to spend part of his life in a psychiatric clinic. Albin Planinc, who in his manner of play so resembled Tal, flashed across the chess firmament in the late '60s and early '70s, and played brilliantly in tournaments. His career also did not last long: as a result of a severe psychic disorder he too had to give up chess and became a regular patient at a special clinic.

But what are the boundaries of common sense, reason, normality? Clear reference markers are lacking. Often it is a question of frontier regions, in the thickets of which even psychiatrists lose their way. Vladimir Nabokov, who by his own admission took particular pleasure in composing 'suicide studies' – where White forces Black to win – said in an interview on French television: 'Yes, Fischer is a strange person, but there is nothing abnormal about a chess player being abnormal, this is normal. Take the case of Rubinstein, a well-known player of the early part of the century, who each day was taken by ambulance from the lunatic asylum, where he stayed constantly, to a café where he played, and then was taken back to his gloomy little room. He did not like to look at his opponent, but an empty chair at the chess board irritated him even more. Therefore in front of him they placed a mirror, where he saw his reflection, and, perhaps, also the real Rubinstein.'

Even in the years of his triumphs the great Akiba liked to sit half turned at the chess board, as though keeping aloof from his opponent and playing only his own game. And is not the same aloofness from others and defence of his brittle ego to be heard in Rubinstein's words: 'Tomorrow I am playing against the black pieces', in reply to a question about the name of his opponent in the next round. His nurse, madame Rubin-Zimmer, remembered: 'He was an unusually calm and self-controlled person. He was easy to look after. Physically he was exceptionally strong and very healthy for his age. But from time to time he would behave strangely. For days on end he would not come out of the room for even a short walk. Or sometimes in the evening he would not want to go to bed. Then he would sit in the armchair next to the bed and meditate deeply about something or move the pieces on a pocket chess set.'

We do not know how the lessons went, when the young O'Kelly went to the clinic to visit the famous Maestro. What was Rubinstein thinking of when, in the very last period of his confinement, he would sit for a long time in front of a chess board, with the pieces set up in the initial position, sometimes making the move 1.c2-c4 and, taking the pawn back after half an hour's thought, again looking at the chess board? What solution to the secret of the initial position did he imagine that he saw?

It is hard to say how the life of a nervous and impressionable American youth would have turned out, had he, after shining at university, based it in accordance with the inscription on his diploma: 'Paul Charles Morphy Esquire, has the right to practise as a lawyer over the entire territory of the United States.' The chess world would have lost one of its greatest geniuses, but, perhaps, he would not have spent the last twenty years of his life in a state of severe psychic disorder. The first world champion Wilhelm Steinitz, who also ended his life in a psychiatric clinic, wrote: 'Chess is not for the weak of spirit, it devours a person entirely. To get to the bottom of this game, he gives himself up into slavery.'

His life in chess, outside of everyday concerns, was his real life.

This voluntary, pleasant slavery went without saying for one of the most outstanding players of the last century. Robert Fischer expressed genuine surprise: 'What else is there?' in reply to a question by an interviewer, as to what he did apart from chess. The champion gave the following explanation for his victories at the chess board: 'I devote 98 per cent of my mental energy to chess. The others devote only 2 per cent.' To what use did he put the two per cent of mental energy, remaining after chess? From childhood Fischer knew that money is good, that it is even better when there is a lot, and if possible if this is expressed in figures with six noughts. But what to do with this money? With money in general? In the end, does it matter along the streets of which town – New York, Pasadena or Budapest – you wander, fearing the omnipresent journalists and photographers? After all, that other chess world, the only one, is always inside you, at any time of day and night and at any point on the earth.

Aristotle wrote: 'Of the winners at the Olympic Games, only two or three gained victories both as boys and as mature men. The premature strain of preparatory exercises so exhausts one's strength, that later, at a mature age, it is nearly always lacking.'

In our day top chess demands even more all-devouring preparation, complete concentration, and aloofness from everything else. In the future this tendency will only be intensified. Players will reach the summit and pass their peak well before thirty. Too much nervous energy will have been spent on preparation and struggle in the younger years.

Giving the joy of creativity, and sometimes prizes and money, chess at the very highest level demands a trifle in return – the soul.

In the very last period of his life Alvis Vitolins would still be in the club nearly every day, giving advice to anyone who asked him, playing blitz, and analysing often until deep into the night. Sometimes he would even spend the night there. He was still gripped by a frenzied passion for analysis that could last for long hours or days, not distinguishing yesterday from the day before. For him chess was never amusing; his life in chess, outside of everyday concerns, was his real life. He lived in chess, in solitude, as in a voluntary ghetto, and he felt uncomfortable outside the gates of this ghetto in the other big world, which was unreal and often hostile for him.

In addition he had reached the age of fifty and at this stage of his life he must have felt that he was no longer needed by anyone. Material things became determining and this material world, which he had always regarded with fear, menacingly impended over him. Vitolins was discarded by the federation, where he had been working as a trainer, for the simple reason that his job ceased to exist. It was not a question, of course, of the pennies that Alvis received there – his connections with the world collapsed. He had always been indifferent to what he ate and what he was dressed in. While his parents were alive this was their concern. They died within the space of one week, and on New Year's Eve 1996 the psychiatrist Eglitis, also a chess player, who had been treating Vitolins for free, also died.

Ragged, unkempt and toothless, Alvis came to say goodbye, the day before carrying out his conscious decision, to those who still remembered him. Only the following day did they realize what kind of a goodbye it had been.

What did he think about on his last day? What is life for? What is the reason for this world? What is fate? What is chess? Did he say farewell to it, or, like Nabokov's hero did he feel that: '...the chess men were pitiless, they held and absorbed him. There was horror in this, but in this also was the sole harmony, for what else exists in the world but chess? Fog, the unknown, non-being...'

Did he remember the fatal jump of Karen Grigorian, who also rebelled against the conventional: mors certa, hora certa sed ignota (death is certain, its hour is inevitable, but unknown)? Ignota? Or did he subconsciously follow the advice of the ancients: 'The main thing is, remember that the door is open. Do not be cowardly, but, like children, when they do not like a game, they say: I won't play any more. So, you too, when to you something feels the same, say: I won't play any more – and go away, go away, and if you remain, don't complain.'

He had never complained about this life, but also he did not want to remain in it any longer.

Sigulda is one of the most beautiful places in Latvia. Mysterious sandy caves, the ruins of medieval fortresses and castles, an enormous park with ancient oaks divided by the swift-flowing Gauja with its precipitous banks. It is also good here in winter, when all is snowy and the trees are covered in hoar-frost. When the only thing sparkling in the sun is the white-blue ice of the hardened river, and it beckons, beckons to you, and there only remains the last jump. Like Luzhin, who 'at the instant when icy air gushed into his mouth, ... saw exactly what kind of eternity was obligingly and inexorably spread out before him'.

On a frosty day, the 16th February 1997, Alvis Vitolins threw himself down onto this ice from the railway bridge spanning the Gauja river.

I knew it would happen one day, but even so, it was a shock when it did. In the autumn of 2000, Garry Kasparov lost his world championship title, in what proved to be a shockingly one-sided match against Vladimir Kramnik. Confounded by the dreaded Berlin Wall, Kasparov did not win a single game. A 15-year reign of unparalleled brilliance and domination ended not with a bang, but a whimper – and that *really was something I never thought I would see.*

Kramnik joins the club

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

In the second half of the Brain Games World Championship match Vladimir Kramnik continued his impressive demonstration of strength and imperturbability. The reversal of fortune that Garry Kasparov might have hoped for never occurred. Kramnik increased his lead to two points in Game 10 and stood firm with the composure and panache of a true champion in the remaining games. Kasparov took his 8½-6½ defeat in style: 'Kramnik is the 14th World Champion. I have to admit it. He joined the club and I have to congratulate him.'

At the gate of the Riverside Studios the visitors who had wanted to catch a final glimpse of Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik learned that there was not going to be a Game 16. No, unfortunately not, and the old and the new king were not going to play two rapid games, as had been rumoured, either. Instead, Kramnik would lecture on the crucial games in the match together with Daniel King and speak about his career in an interview with Eric Schiller. Garry Kasparov would be absent today. The news was received soberly. What could still surprise these people at the end of a match that had rocked the chess world and had led to the shocking end of Kasparov's 15-year supremacy? Moreover, three hours of inside information straight from the new Champion's mouth was definitely to be preferred to the possibility of a perfunctory draw in eleven moves or so, with nothing left to fight for.

Vladimir Kramnik gave the loyal public good value for the 20 pounds they coughed up one final time. Taking his time, he allowed the spectators a revealing glimpse of his thoughts as he started playing through Game 14, the last critical moment where Kasparov felt he could still have changed the course of the match. Kramnik spoke wittily and with the dignity and conviction of a champion. As he reached the endgame, he pointed out that he very much would have preferred to have his f-pawn still on f2 instead of on f3. 'I considered playing f3-f2, but I was afraid he might notice,' he said with a mischievous smile. Suggestions that he had been lost somewhere were calmly dismissed. His position had been uncomfortable, but nowhere had he found a win for Black. No, not in the final position in which Kasparov had produced a lengthy line on his website, claiming a forced win for Black, either. Kramnik shrugged, pointed out that he himself had suggested 'this move ♔f6' to Kasparov after the game and went on to demonstrate how he would have drawn easily in that case as well.

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

As Kramnik embarks on another game, I sneak out of the studio. They're still meticulously checking everyone for mobile phones, switched off or not, although there doesn't seem to be much sense now in secretly transmitting moves to the stage. Vladimir Kramnik I will visit later this evening to talk about his remarkable victory. Now I want to think about another appointment at 6 p.m. Over the years, interviewing Garry Kasparov has developed into an enjoyable standard procedure. Kasparov would play a tournament or a match, demonstrate his superiority and win, and at the end of this exercise we'd discuss yet another success. Rarely did I speak to him in defeat – certainly not a defeat of this magnitude. How is he coping? What is the gripe he has been hinting at and that he only wanted to reveal after the match? How could a player who was so dominant in the past two years lose a match without even winning one game? Why did he look so subdued and sometimes even timid? Yes, why was he so unrecognizable?

His hotel, in any case, does not seem to be part of the explanation. The Milestone Hotel, overlooking Hyde Park, is the kind of top-end hotel that looks after its residents' every wish and desire. Here luxury is omnipresent without being overbearing. The white sand of the ashtrays in front of the elevators is shaped in an elegant 'M'. At the back of the hotel the Kasparov clan occupies three apartments. An uncharacteristic 25 minutes late Garry Kasparov walks into the living room of the apartment that has been serving as his team's meeting place for breakfast, lunch and dinner during the match. Except for a tiny smile, his expression is fairly neutral. He is dressed casually and has not yet shaved. Every free minute he has he is putting in the analysis of the match, he says.

– Are you analysing the match technically or psychologically?

'Both. It's clearly not as much Kramnik's win as my loss. I made so many mistakes and did not anticipate what he was going to do. Basically everything was about preparation. The first two games had a devastating effect, when I understood that I would have to play endgames. The story is simple. I had two successful years. I believed that what I had to do was add volume. We had great ideas in the Sveshnikov, the Rauzer, the Petroff, in anything you can imagine. The endgame was somewhere on the agenda, but we didn't have the time. With black frankly speaking we relied on the Grünfeld with the Queen's Gambit Accepted as a reserve. So, when after Game 2 you realize that your main black opening is not going to work, and the guy is going to trade queens with white, that doesn't have a good effect. Still, I think I played relatively well. After Game 8 I was about to retake the initiative. If not for this great decision of Malcolm (Pein, the original match director who resigned a few weeks before the event- DJtG), who in fact asked me if I was against this or not, to play both on Saturday and Sunday, I still could have saved the match. The three Sunday games killed me eventually. It's very difficult to play with white if you've had a very big fight with black the day before. It's a loss, but I was not outplayed. In the normal positions I played better than Kramnik.

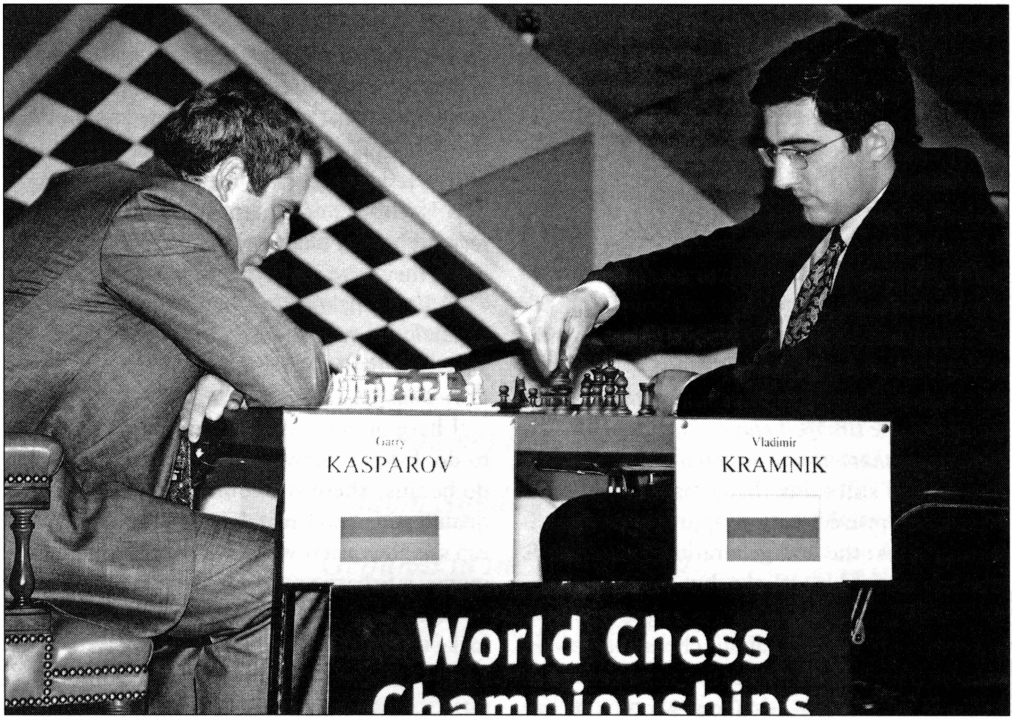
The problem was I burned myself down, because we had to rebuild my entire opening repertoire. I worked for hours and hours. I had a parallel training session and then I had to go and play Kramnik. In Game 8 I stabilized the situation. Knight c7 I invented at 2.05 in the morning. At 2.05 I told the guys, Knight c7 and then f5. They spent the whole night and we proved it was a great idea.'

– This was essentially the only Kasparov game.

'This was probably the best novelty of the match. Obviously very important was Rook takes b7 in Game 2. Amazingly, for eight years everyone simply blundered. In fact, it's the first line of the computer. Rook b7, Knight c6, Bishop c4, the machine just shows it. For us it was just a sideline in the Grünfeld. We spent so much time on Rook b1 and other key lines. During the match we tried to rehabilitate this line, but I didn't like the positions. Eventually I used the Queens Gambit Accepted as a transition and then the Nimzo-Indian. But Game 10... We didn't even look at this line. In normal conditions I could even have saved the game after Bishop takes e6. After Rook c7 it's just a worse endgame by force. I saw that, but I barely saw the pieces.'

– Before the match I said to Kramnik that one of his biggest opponents was he himself, burning himself while trying to keep on preparing during the match, as he has done so often at tournaments. Instead it happened to you, despite all your experience.

'The problem was that our preparation was absolutely wrong. For the past three years I



DAGOBERT KOHLMEYER

Kramnik, playing 3...♘f6 in the Berlin - the move that, more than any other, won him the match.

have been concentrating on winning tournaments with plus seven, while he was concentrating on creating a very good opening repertoire with black. He created a very small parameter. These victories worked against me. I didn't want to change anything. This summer my mind was working better than at any time in my life. I could see the lines without a computer while the guys were working with computers – also during the match. If Game 9 had not been on Sunday, I still would have had a chance of winning. Game 9 and 10 had a crucial effect. After game 10 I somehow lost the will to fight. I had to win two games and I couldn't win a single game. I couldn't believe that I had chances and in every single game except for 13, I did have chances. Game 12 was a serious blow. I played a very good game, calculated so many lines, defended very well, saw some great lines, took the initiative (raises his voice and slaps his hand), was close! I had to play Rook c8 and I don't think he could have saved the game. Maybe, but Black has a healthy pawn. After Game 12 they still kept telling me that I had chances, and suddenly in Game 14 I again got my chance. (He describes the game and gives numerous variations in rapid-fire speech) I came here and said, hell, I could have saved the match. Because I believe Kramnik would collapse after his first loss. His confidence was very shaky at the end. Amazingly, even in Game 15 I had a great chance. I wouldn't say I would win Game 16, but amazingly after Game 10 I had chances in every game. It was like a punishment for me giving up too early. It was more about me wasting chances than about Kramnik playing a great match.'

– *Did you consider forgetting about all opening preparation and just playing chess?*

'A good recommendation. At one point I wished we could change bishop and knight in the opening position, because then I had no doubts I would win the match. Kramnik spent three years building up his opening repertoire with black. After c4, d4 or e4 he always plays, not the sharpest, but the toughest opening, just to kill White's initiative. His style is more destructive. He is protecting himself first. He doesn't take the initiative, he doesn't attack. That's why he doesn't lose much. His goal was not to lose, mine was to win many games.'

– *Is this a disaster for chess then?*

'It's a different approach, which proved successful. I don't think it's good for the future of chess. In order to change the trend I have to come back and beat Kramnik. I think I can do it, because I don't believe his approach is positive. But it's a style and you cannot criticize it. If it's winning, it's winning. Ultimately chess is about winning and losing. Strategically he used everything he learned from Botvinnik and myself. It's spectacular chess preparation. And everybody has to admire what they did.'

– *You've always said that a match is the only way to find out the strongest player. Now fans of yours could argue that a tournament is a better idea.*

'No, no. I still think that a match is decisive. The match proved that my approach is not sufficient to beat the new generation. You can talk about Anand, Shirov, Leko, but Kramnik is the leader of the new generation. You may remember when I was talking about chess champions, that everybody represents his time. It's a very pragmatic time now. It's about winning or losing. Kramnik is a typical representative of this time and he fits my theory. He is the 14th World Champion. I have to admit it. He joined the club and I have to congratulate him. This is not Khalifman, Mattison, Bogoljubow or whoever wins India. This is the man who joins Capablanca and the others. He did it by winning fair and square in a match. Whether I lost it or did something wrong, who cares?

'So the question is what can I do to change this trend? And the answer is simple. I have to go back and learn. I have to learn how to play this kind of endgame. I have to fight this strategy where there is oppression around the whole board. He found a way to fight with someone who is superior to him in complicated positions with queens. My mistake was that I did not anticipate that he could be so 'negative'.'

As we discuss the strength of both teams, Kasparov states that he has no doubts his team, consisting of Dokhoian, Kobalia and Kharlov, would have been up to the task if they had not been barking up the wrong tree. When he learns that the grandmasters who helped Kramnik, apart from the team that was present in London, not only included names as Tkachiev and Sakaev, as he suspected, but also Gelfand, Morozevich, Dolmatov and Svidler, he falls silent for an instant. Quickly regaining his composure, he continues: 'That's what I suspected when I said that Kramnik got the support of the entire chess elite. He was fed with ideas from everybody. That's why to some extent we were not on equal terms. He didn't have to work hard to create new ideas, they were supplying him with ideas.'

– *You've indicated that you would like to play a rematch. There is no mention of a rematch in the plans that Brain Games disclosed before the match. Why would there be a rematch?*

'I have no idea what Brain Games are going to do. I don't know what Kramnik is going to do because there is a contract that talks about qualification and a match in 2002. But as far as I can see, the easiest way for Brain Games to raise money is to have a rematch. Eventually, as I sadly joked, there was only one way for this match to make the front page. By my losing. (With a wry smile) And as someone dedicated to the interest of chess I did. Nothing is clear yet. If Brain Games come up with a contract for the cycle and for the match, I will sign the contract. What else can I do? But the situation is such that they have to raise money. It seems to me, as an outsider now, that they can easily raise more money now for the rematch. You tell me what match the public wants to see next year. I guess Kaspa, Kramnik-Kasparov. If there is x million dollars available that's the public's wish. If that is not the case, I will do whatever is required. My only hope is that Brain Games will organize something. Because I want a fair chance to play.'

– *Why did you keep banging your head against this Berlin Wall? Why didn't you switch?*

'To what? To the Scotch? Do you understand that the Scotch is more vulnerable than the Ruy Lopez? I tried hard. We had ideas. Trust me, I didn't do it for nothing. If somebody wants to play the Berlin in one of the coming tournaments I will be ready. The problem is that the key games in the Berlin Defence were played on Sundays. Games 9 and 13. To switch to d4? I understand the size of his preparation. And maybe one day he'd switch to what I had prepared.'

– *Do you find it unethical that he got additional help from the players just mentioned?*

'Kramnik is the leader of his generation in a pragmatic world. Kramnik asked for an advance from the organizers before the match, so I guess he paid, they delivered. It's absolutely correct.'

– Many people had the feeling that other things were bugging you during the match.

'(Abruptly) No, nothing. Period. Zero. It's crap. Everything you read in the papers is crap.'

– You created this idea yourself by saying that there were things bothering you...

'The only things that were bothering me were the things I just told you. There is nothing behind it. I was well prepared for the match and my mind was working as sharply as ever. The only game where my mind was not functioning was Game 10, after a sleepless night. Shay Bushinsky had a computer test, 200 positions. We did 70 positions. I was as quick as the computer (snaps his fingers) in solving all the combinations. That's why I could save Game 6 for instance. That's why I could come up with Knight c7 at 2.05 in the morning. If there had not been these damn Sundays, all the Gelfands of this world would not have saved Kramnik from disaster.'

'If it had not been for these damn Sundays, all the Gelfands in the world could not have saved Kramnik.'

– What about Game 7, which you drew in eleven moves? When at the press conference you said that you would explain after the match.

'Game 7? I didn't want to play the Ruy Lopez again. Up to 45 minutes before the game I was still considering what I was going to play. I didn't like the position and I decided why should I play this?'

– That's it?

'That's it. People don't understand the importance of this match for the development of chess. It could be that we are entering a new era. A new kind of chess.'

– Is this really true? Who can imitate Kramnik's play? If you're not that strong it's a joke.

'It doesn't matter. We live in a world where nobody cares what you sell. You have to be successful.'

– Amateurs will play this Berlin Defence, get smacked in the face and that's it. Go back to the old routine.

'Maybe. That's why I believe I will come back. Because chess still needs Garry Kasparov's chess. This chess is not going to last forever.'

– Only Kramnik can play it.

'Not only Kramnik. You will see other players. Others will stick to the old chess, but in order for the old chess to survive I will have to beat Kramnik. If I have my chance within the next two years I will do it, because I believe that I am the stronger player. I believe I can learn, I am a good learner, I also learned from Botvinnik. If I have to learn from Kramnik I will learn from Kramnik. It doesn't hurt my pride. I will find a way to break his defence.'

– As for this rematch, don't you fear a repeat of the IBM trauma or is this different?

'Oh yeah, with IBM I was cheated. Here I lost because I made mistakes.'

– But in both cases you didn't secure a rematch in advance.

'Kramnik could say, yes, no, whatever. But I expect him, whatever Brain Games does, to live according to the standards I established. He won the match, I hope he will not only inherit the title, but also the rules I followed during my 15 years. I never refused to play the strongest opponent. I tried to play Karpov in '97, I tried to play Shirov in '98, I tried to play Anand in '99. What was the problem? There was no money available, because nobody cared. I think we live in a world where only money can indicate public interest. If there is no money, there is no public interest. Nobody paid for the match against Shirov, because nobody cared about it. Everybody knew the result. Money for Kramnik was available. If money is available for Kasparov to play a rematch, I believe Kramnik must accept. It's a moral standard because it means that the public wants to see the match. Eventually there should be a cycle as well, but everything in the world of chess should be driven by public interest. That's how we can survive. We have the choice between Ilyumzhinov's type of money and money that can be traced to its sources. Either we go into oblivion, to India, or we play in London, Madrid, Amsterdam, New York. For this Garry Kasparov's word is not enough. You also need Kramnik to live up to the same standard. I trust that he learned from me not only how to play chess and how to prepare.'

– *Would you be shocked if Kramnik played a reunification match with a FIDE champion?*

'First of all I think there is a legal contract that prevents him from doing so for a while. Two, I don't think Vladimir will ever want to go back to Khalifman's world. He is now in the ranks of Capablanca and Alekhine (holds his hand above his head). To go there? (hand disappears under the table)'

– *Are you afraid of developments that might leave you isolated?*

'Well, whatever happens, I'll still be playing in the tournaments. I'm going to win Wijk aan Zee and I am going to make it very difficult for anyone to isolate me, because I am going to beat the hell out of them. In Wijk aan Zee you will see that I still have a couple of good ideas in stock. Anyone won Wijk aan Zee three times in a row? No? So, time to make history.'

– *What do you reply now to those who said that the match was prearranged?*

'I expect Mr Shirov to apologize publicly. I am not going to sue him in his stupid manner. If he is a man, and not an overgrown boy, he must apologize publicly to me and Kramnik in Wijk aan Zee. He can write a statement. If he doesn't, I'm not going to shake his hand. It's an insult. Probably he doesn't understand it, but this is not something you can say.'

– *What did your mother tell you after you lost the title?*

'Let's leave something for us. We're not dying. We're talking about the future. We have problems, we can see our mistakes. We had a very tough time during the match. Now we are concerned about the future and how we can make a comeback. Because we all know that it was not me losing to a superior force. It was me making mistakes and losing to a man who used these mistakes perfectly.'

– *You repeatedly said that you wanted your son to see you as World Champion...*

'And I still want my son to visit me at a world championship match. I gave my word and I will do my best for my son to make a comeback. I don't see anyone but Kramnik who can play me in a match. I have enough energy for the next five years. My son is four now and he already understands. He was very upset after Game 2. He was crying and saying why didn't he fight, then daddy would beat him. I don't think the future looks that bad. My only concern is that the world of chess is still in a bad shape. Personally I hope that Brain Games will build the structure, and out of self-interest, that they hold a rematch.'

– *Your entire attitude is so positive, probably mainly to protect yourself. Is this also the way you tried to think when you went to sleep the first night without the title?*

'Look, I had a very bad time here, but I told myself, everything I did I did with class. I wanted to behave like a gentleman and I think I did.'

– *At some point I wondered, why doesn't he do something drastic? Break some rule, not go to a press conference...*

'I have always fulfilled all the conditions I have signed for in my life. I wanted chess players to follow written contracts, to follow certain rules of ethics. When I lose it is important for me to show them that I respect the rules I signed for. When you win people should remember this, but when you lose people should remember this moment as well. Nobody is unbeatable in this world. You show the world your human side but you have to behave.'

– *For a long time you were considered unbeatable, some players even called you God.*

'God? So, I am not God, I am human and I am proud that I am human. I don't think that anyone in the history of sport will repeat what I did for 15 years. I believe it is the best record in the history of any sport. But the good part is that the story's not over yet. Consider it a time-out. I'll just have to wait for Brain Games to tell me how I can make my comeback and I will start making my plans.'

– *Every champion adds something to the game. What do you believe is Kramnik's contribution?*

'It tells us that chess is not only Garry Kasparov's bright games. It tells us that chess is hard work, that chess is endgames, that sometimes you have to consider going to the endgame directly from the opening. It's about slight advantages. I haven't formalized it yet, but I feel that it perfectly fits in with the world around us. Like I fitted the period of revolutions, like Fischer fitted the period of hippies and individualism, Kramnik fits the period of the Dow Jones. Winning or losing, who cares? What's the evaluation of the market? Who cares about your product? Show me the value of your shares. But I don't think it is going to last long. I still think there will be a backlash against this pragmatism.'

– *Comparable to a tendency we see in the real world...*

'Yes, generally we feel that pragmatism is going to be hit soon. It's too cynical. What I have to do to beat Kramnik, is to come back with the old good style, but heavily protected with pragmatism. I lost two games in this match, and those were not games that Kramnik won.'

Chess and the art of ice hockey strategy

As I leave The Milestone Hotel I suspect that getting to my next destination should not be too difficult. After all, the encyclopaedic knowledge of street names of London taxi drivers is legendary. Heron House, the residence of the Kramnik team, may be situated some 10 miles to the west in the suburb of Chiswick, but still I expect any cabby to nod in recognition when he hears that the address is Chiswick Mall. Reality is different. Puzzled looks, blank stares, hands thrown in the air, requests to leave the car and please try a colleague, soon drive home what Kramnik meant when he said that it was not so easy to find. But eventually we manage, albeit after more than an hour. When the third and highly helpful taxi-driver finally finds Chiswick Mall and suggests for me to continue my search on foot, a voice shouts from a pitch-dark garden 'Are you looking for Heron House?' A voice from heaven. It's the security man that Kramnik has hired for the final days of the match to secure his privacy, particularly when he appears in public (who would find him here?).

Heron House is a spacious, run-down house that has seen better days, although it seems certain that the most glorious part of its history was written in the past weeks. The atmosphere inside is relaxed. Evgeny Bareev and Joel Lautier are about to leave to have dinner with some friends. Valery Krilov, the physiotherapist, will soon make it an early night. Miguel Illescas is busy in the living room, while his uncle, who has been cooking their meals, kindly offers to make a tortilla with salmon. Kramnik suggests we sit in the kitchen. He is still wearing a suit. As he further loosens his tie he hits on a better idea and asks his security man to go and get a big order of Thai food from a nearby restaurant. While we are waiting for the food to arrive, there is time enough to speak about the match.

– *On the evening that you won the match you had half a glass of champagne in your hand but felt no urge to get drunk. You planned to lie down on your bed and think everything over. What have you been thinking about?*

'In fact I changed my plans. We were sitting in the living room and were just talking. Everyone started to explain his views on the match. We spoke about the future, a very interesting talk that I enjoyed a lot. Finally I went to bed at nine in the morning. I got up at one and then there were eight hours of interviews in a row.'

– *How do you explain your victory?*

'There are certain banal points that I already mentioned. First of all to beat Kasparov you shouldn't be afraid of him. Many other players can say whatever they want, but I see in their eyes that they are simply afraid. He is an excellent player but he also has weaknesses. He is human after all. He is not God as Ivanchuk said and I proved it. I had a very clear strategy from the beginning of the match and managed to realize it.'

– *You remained unperturbed and did not let him get close in a psychological sense.*

'I didn't have any psychological problem dealing with him. On the contrary, it was he who had some psychological problems when we were playing. As he had had in the past. His score against me is not too convincing. He should try to solve those problems. Not me. My psychological preparation concerned only minor facets, just some little things I should do during the match. Not to react to things. I made a mistake that I didn't do anything specific when I played the match against Shirov. Because I definitely had some problems when I played him at the time. I should have worked a lot on that but I didn't take it too seriously. Now it was different. I had learned my lesson.'

– *Kasparov said that his opening repertoire proved* *useless when he ran into an opening repertoire that you had been forging for three years. To be untouchable as Black.*

'No, no. I can tell you honestly, on this endgame I'd been working for two weeks. It was in no way the only weapon I had, but it was good enough. In fact, it was mostly psychological, because it is clear that White is slightly better in this endgame. But I knew that he wouldn't like it for several reasons. First of all, computer preparation is useless here. Also it is not his type of position. The other thing which is quite important actually is that the Petroff Defence, which I have been defending a lot with black over the past few years, helped me a lot in this match. I always ended up with worse positions and in the end I was no longer afraid of them. I learned this from Dolmatov, when I was working with him. He didn't care if he was worse in the endgame, because he knew it was not enough to lose. I took this attitude from him. I knew that I was slightly worse, but I also knew that this is normally not enough for White to win the game.'

– *Were you surprised that he kept returning to this Berlin Defence?*

'Not really. Because, whatever he may say, he understands that White is pressing in this endgame. It also was a challenge for him. He immediately gets this slightly better endgame, I don't even fight for equality. He fails once or twice and then he wants to prove that he can win it. That was a mistake probably.'

– *When did you decide on this generally defensive strategy?*

'I follow ice hockey a bit, and the Czech national team has been winning everything the last couple of years. The Olympics, championships, everything. But they never score more than two goals. Which is not normal for ice hockey. They always win 2-0, 1-0 or 2-1, all the time. They don't show any brilliance but they win all the events. The Russians may win their other matches 8-1 or 10-2 but they will lose 0-1 against the Czechs in the final. Then nobody cares any longer how much the Russians scored in previous matches because in the decisive match they are helpless. The Czechs have a very solid defence. In fact there are some parallels with chess. They have a brilliant goalkeeper. In chess this is the last barrier, when you are on the edge of losing, but you sense very well where exactly this edge is. And then they go on the counterattack. Their strategy is so clear. They have been doing this for two or three years and nobody can do anything. This idea occurred to me when they won another championship in May and I had already signed the contract to play Garry. I thought, okay it's a different game but the approach is very interesting. And that's how I chose this defensive approach. You need to be sure that you will be strong enough to hold. If you are not sure that you can hold worse positions, this approach makes no sense. I had been defending all these Petroffs, which I hated, but it proved very useful. It's no accident that I lost so rarely, because I got really aware of this final edge.'

– *People may say, first we had an attacking World Champion, now we have a defending World Champion.*

'No, it says nothing about my style. This was just the best approach against this particular opponent. If I play Anand, or someone else, it may be completely different. I am quite a universal player. As you could see in Dortmund, where I was quite aggressive. I can play different styles. This was my advantage. He sticks to his own play, he plays his own chess very well, but he always sticks to his own chess. I can adapt, because I am more universal than Garry. I chose the most unpleasant approach for this particular opponent but that doesn't mean that I will continue in this style. Not at all.'

– *As you say, in recent games you were playing very aggressively. Did you want him to get the idea that you might play like this?*

'Yes, of course. Also this e4 against Leko in Cologne was to create the idea that I was preparing for e4 and an aggressive approach.'

– *Kasparov calls you the champion of the new generation, a very pragmatic generation in pragmatic times. He drew a parallel with the stock trade. The quality of the product doesn't matter too much as long as the result, the stock rates are okay.*

'No, I think he confuses me with someone else. It's absolutely not the way I feel I play. It has nothing to do with pragmatism. It's simply that I am calmer. If I don't show emotions it doesn't mean that I don't have emotions. You have known me for a long time and know that I have always cared a lot about the level of my play. The way I play. There are chess players who don't care about this at all and simply count their points. That's not me. But this was the world championship match and I wanted to win it very much. I simply had to forget about all this brilliance and win. I was pragmatic in this match, but I am not very pragmatic in general. I just have a different approach to chess, different views. I believe that chess is a defensive game in general. If you defend well this is more effective than attacking all the time, to put it simply. Every top player sees chess differently. Perhaps this is why I make many draws, but not because I am pragmatic. If I were pragmatic I would have done many things differently in the past years.'

> *'Actually, now I am sure that I am stronger than him in pure chess.'*

– *Does this result confirm a favourite statement amongst top players? Take away Kasparov's openings and he is still a strong player, but nothing more than that?*

'I don't want to insult him, but in a way this is true. He's a brilliant player, an absolutely brilliant player with his openings and still an excellent player without his openings, but already not better than some others. In any case he is not better than me. Actually now I am sure that I am stronger than him in pure chess. Which I actually proved. It isn't true that I was much better prepared. You simply look at the games. I was psychologically better prepared. My preparation was cleverer. I was getting him in positions that he doesn't like. But there was nothing objective in it. Objectively I was getting a small advantage with white and so was he. I even was worse after the opening with white in Games 8 and 14. It's not objective. He was out of his normal mood. Okay, he was better, better, better, but he cannot win. When he is a bit worse he takes no risks. He just hangs back and defends everything. And this gives him the feeling that his preparation is worse. I outplayed him in match strategy, but I am convinced that he had a lot more opening novelties than I had.'

– *Some of the ideas came from people outside your direct team. Kasparov was shocked when he heard about the extent of this help and learned that also people like Gelfand, Morozevich and Svidler had helped you.*

'I don't see any reason for him to be surprised. It's like Rustam (Kamsky) used to say: 'Organizer pay, Gata play.' Just pay and they work for you. I spent a lot of money on preparation. It's a matter of money but also a matter of friendship. All these people were my friends and they wanted to help me. Maybe some of them would even have helped me for free, but I can't stand this. He could also have hired five 2670 players but he didn't. It's his own fault. There is nothing to complain about. It's your own choice. Take everyone you want. If you don't want to do it, your opponent will.'

– *Before the match you had indicated that several players came to you offering their help for free.*

'I also mentioned Alexander Morozevich. With him I didn't do any chess work. Just some general advice, some friendly talks. It's not that they were all on my salary list. Just very friendly. Boris Gelfand too, no chess work. Just a few little ideas about a general approach. Not all of them were working directly on chess or being paid. Some of them, like Svidler, I would pay for some concrete work. Maybe one week. But I believe that they all were sincere and I really appreciate their help. There were many other people who offered their help for free but you cannot make your team too big. You cannot organize 30 people. I had to draw a line and say no to some people, even if I would have liked them to help me.'

– *It's a telling sign that quite a few top players desperately wanted you to win. What kind of change in the chess climate do you think you can bring about?*

'I don't know, we will see. Garry was not bad at all as a champion. He may have made some mistakes, but he was also a big name and found a lot of money. The attitude is simply that people always want a new name. He had been there for too long. I don't want to insult him or anything but people just got tired. Not because of his personality but because it was the same name. They wanted a new name. This may have a positive effect. It may bring some new sponsors, some new interest in chess. To a great extent this will depend on the way I behave and my attitude. I don't know yet. I want to enjoy the moment and then I will start thinking. I feel some responsibility, I've always wanted to do something for the chess world. I tried, for instance in 1997, but then I realized that with my status at the time I simply couldn't do anything. Now my influence will be much greater, and I will try to do something good. But I am not sure that I will manage, because the situation is really bad. But I will do my best, I promise.'

– *Do you have any reunifying ideas?*

'I have many ideas at the moment. This is quite problematic. What about FIDE, what about reunification? I have a contract with Brain Games and so far they have been fulfilling all their obligations, as I was fulfilling mine. If they are going to fulfil their future obligations, and I hope they will, I am going to do the same. It's a matter of Brain Games and FIDE if they want to find a solution to this problem. If they come up with an idea they can tell me and I will think about it. If not, I can't do anything, as I have a contract.'

– *Kasparov said that you were now in the ranks of Capablanca and Alekhine, why would you stoop to the world of Khalifman.*

'It's not about this. I have a different way of thinking. I would go down to any level to improve the situation. Let's say, start from the second round of the knock-out system. If I thought it was right I would do it. It's not about my ego at all. But I need to see a clear way in a good direction that will make chess players happy and bring new sponsors. I am not going to do something just for the sake of it.'

– *Were you surprised by Kasparov's eagerly expressed wish to have a rematch as soon as possible?*

'No, I understand that he wants this. But we both have a contract that says that they want to organize a cycle. The loser of the match goes to the Candidates' tournament. If I were the loser I would go there. So for the moment there is nothing to talk about. If they have this cycle, there is no choice for him. It's not that I don't want to play another match, that would be very interesting for me, but I think we should stop thinking about ourselves. This was the mistake we have seen all through chess history. Somebody loses a match and then wants a rematch. And if you win you say: No I don't want this anymore. This should be stopped. It's not because I won the match. I've always thought like this. A lot of damage was done to chess because of the personal wishes of players.'

– *You don't want the world to suffer for your personal wishes.*

'It's only human. But after all I don't see any problem for Kasparov. He is definitely... number two now (with a smirk) and I am absolutely sure he will win the candidates' matches. So, just go on and win it and play the match. Even if everyone was in favour of a rematch it would not be happening in six months. I need a rest. It would happen perhaps in 18 months' or two years' time. So just win these candidates' matches and then play me. I understand what he meant. I got there without qualifying, and I kind of should feel obliged to do this. But I don't. I would go into the qualification cycle if they staged it and try to qualify. So, if this cycle takes place I don't see any reason to have a revenge match.'

– *And people who suggest that he better play a match against Shirov, and if he loses he can play you?*

'(Laughs) It's all about the history of chess. Always these matches. Now he has to play a match against this person, now he can't play a match against this person because he lost a match five years ago, and this person lost to someone else. That's all nonsense. Let's make a system and nobody will care about who lost to whom in a match or if he really is the best or not. He qualified, so he plays. That should be the system. It's not my fault that I became World Champion without a system. I've always said that I wanted a clear system. Now the only thing that I can repeat is that I want a normal world championship system and I am ready to defend my title. I don't care who will be my opponent, as long as there is a good system.'

– *The match was a big success for you but many people cannot believe that it was a big success for Brain Games.*

'We don't know the numbers. I hope it was a success, because then they will have an even stronger desire to continue. Let's just wait and see.'

– *Now that you are world champion, do you feel the obligation that you have to win Wijk aan Zee?*

'No, not at all. I will need some time to begin to understand my new status and what it will be like to play tournaments. But I have a feeling that it will be much easier now. At 25 I have achieved everything in chess. There is nothing more. Okay, there is always something more, but the final goal was to be World Champion. And I achieved this goal. Now it may be easier, psychologically speaking, to play. Just play and enjoy chess. But I am pretty sure that I will continue working on chess seriously, even more seriously. This gave me some additional stimulus.'

– You are not afraid of a feeling of emptiness.

'There will be, but that will pass too.'

'At 25, I have achieved everything in chess. There is nothing more.'

– Every new Champion brings something new to chess. Everyone greeted Kasparov whose dynamic chess put an end to the Karpov era. What will be your contribution in terms of something that will appeal to a larger audience?

'I don't want to sound immodest, but in this match I already brought a new way of playing chess. It's a completely new approach to chess. That is why Garry lost himself, could not be himself. In all his previous matches you could divide his opponents into two groups. Either they had no strategy at all or they had a very mundane strategy, and he knew how to fight it. This was different. I don't say that it is something fantastic or something incredible, a touch of genius. But the way I played him here was completely new.'

– But will this new approach be understandable to the average chess fan?

'You can always explain it in a way that makes it understandable, but that will not be the complete truth. To really understand it you need quite a high level of chess understanding. It's about feeling the direction in which chess develops.'

– When Kasparov became champion the average club player began to play the Najdorf, the King's Indian, began to attack..

'And now they will play the Berlin Wall, right?'

– And they will simply lose.

'They would also lose with the King's Indian. It's not about openings. If you take a look at the history of chess you will see that the point why almost everybody became World Champion was that they brought something completely unexpected at the time when they were fighting for the crown. It was no truth with a capital T, but just something completely new for the moment. They became champions, not because their strategy was the best but because their opponent was unprepared. Just take Tal, most of his combinations were not working, but they were totally new. With Kasparov the same. I saw how he was playing in '83, '84. It was the Karpov era, when in tournaments the top players made eight draws, playing very quietly against each other, and beat two outsiders in an equal endgame. And then a new guy comes along, who attacks, who is very energetic. In '84 Kasparov was maybe not stronger than Kortchnoi in his best years but he was so different. Later of course he was fantastic. The same thing happened here. I don't say that I am so strong now, no, but in this match I was completely different from any player Kasparov had played in the last five years. And he didn't know what to do. History repeats itself. Abstractly speaking, the way he won the title and the way I did it were absolutely the same.'

– To what extent did you benefit from your experience as his second when you prepared for this match?

'I don't think that the point is who benefited more from this. I got to know him, he got to know me. The point is who made better use of this knowledge. Which was me. It's not that I had an advantage from the start. He also knew my way of working, my way of understanding chess. I learned from him and I made good use of it, but he for some reason didn't.'

Throughout his career, co-editor-in-chief Jan Timman has always been an especially great master of analysis, and the pages of New In Chess have frequently been adorned by his penetrating and instructive analyses of games, positions and endgame studies. The following article, from New In Chess 2001/1, gives a typical insight into the ongoing process that is the analytical work of a leading GM.

Five easy pieces

Jan Timman

1981 was the last year in which J.H. Donner played a significant part in the Dutch championship; the championship developed into a tense duel between him and me, which I finally managed to decide in my favour – with the smallest of margins. Afterwards he wrote a well thought-out article about the title fight in *Schaakbulletin*, the predecessor of the present magazine. The article contained many pointed observations, but it concentrated less on actual variations than on the more strategic aspects of the game, with personal remarks sometimes taking precedence.

At the start of the last round we were neck and neck. Both of us would be playing the white pieces, I against Van der Vliet, he against Van der Wiel. As far as my game was concerned he had had no illusions, he declared afterwards, and it is true that the Grünfeld Indian against the first division player from The Hague did not last very long.

Donner was facing a more difficult job against Van der Wiel, who outplayed him in the initial stages of another Nimzo-Indian, although Donner himself hadn't been aware of any danger. With some disdain he reported that he had read the general press release that night: 'Donner barely scraped a draw.' I added a postscript to his remark to the effect that the press report hadn't been all that wrong, even going so far as to suggest that White would have been lost if Black had played a different 25th move.

Three issues later, in *Schaakbulletin* 163, he returned to this matter in an article entitled 'A polemic that stranded'. The polemic had stranded because an amateur chess player, one H. Treur from Oudewater, had indicated a conclusive win for Black. But he continued to dispute the win I had suggested. He had imagined that our polemic would become a 'giants' logomachy for the truth'.

I have to admit that I reacted rather scornfully in the next issue with an article entitled 'The useless monument'. At some stage in the game, Hein Donner was a full rook up, but this was still not enough to withstand the black assault (the extra rook was the useless monument). My win, although less direct than Treur's, was still more than sufficient. Somewhere in my article I had written, 'One glance at Variation A1 told me all I needed to know about the general level of his analysis.'

Hein Donner saw my article in the editorial office of the magazine in the 2de Jan Steenstraat in Amsterdam, and rang me that same evening with the request to take out this denigrating remark. In the course of our conversation he also observed that the main reason why the general level of debate in the Dutch media tended to be so low was because no one was ever prepared to rectify anything. (A result of Holland's extremely tolerant law system.) I acceded to his request and changed 'told me all I needed to know' into 'revealed a rather big hole in the analysis'.

But let's talk about more technical matters. I have selected two games against Dutch players in which the matter of rectification plays a part. These are followed by a game against a player from Russia and one against a player from Belarus, both of whom failed to be objective in their comments.

Let's start with a game from a blindfold five-board simul I gave at the Spui square in Amsterdam in 1989. I had known beforehand that the going would not be easy. For 24 hours my life was devoted to total discipline. It didn't take me too long to score 3½ out of 4, but the last game went less smoothly. I will reprint it here, together with the comments I wrote at the time.

FR 9.1
Jan Timman
Tom Bottema
Amsterdam blindfold simul 1989

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 ♕d7 5.♕g4 ♗f8 6.♘h3 ♘c6

This is how Petrosian used to play it. Black postpones the advance of his c-pawn in order to castle queenside first.

7.♗e3 b6 8.a3 ♗b7 9.♗b5

A strong developing move. Black finds himself under pressure.

9...0-0-0

Black should probably have played 9...a6 here, for now White gains total control of the position.

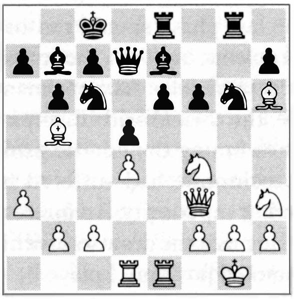
10.♕e2 f6 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♖ad1 ♘g6 14.♖fe1 ♗d6 15.♗h6!

The correct way to preserve the pressure.

15...♖de8 16.♕f3

Forcing back the black bishop.

16...♗e7 17.♘e2 ♖hg8 18.♘ef4



This knight manoeuvre increases the pressure on e6.

18...♗d6 19.♕h5 ♔b8 20.c3 a6 21.♗a4 ♘xf4 22.♘xf4 ♗xf4

Black relinquishes his bishop pair in order to alleviate the white pressure on e6.

23.♗xf4 ♕g7 24.♗g3 ♕g6 25.♕xg6 hxg6

White has no objection to swapping queens. His positional trumps will weigh heavily in the endgame.

26.♖e3 ♖e7 27.♖de1 ♘d8 28.♖f3 ♖f7 29.h4 ♗c8 30.♗c2 ♔b7 31.♗f4 ♖h7 32.g3 ♖f7 33.♗d2 ♗d7 34.♖f4 c5 35.dxc5

So far White had played very well. With 35.♔g2, followed by 36.g4 and 37.♔g3, he could have increased his advantage. In the mistaken belief that the black bishop was still on c8, however, I started an action that turned out to be unjustified.

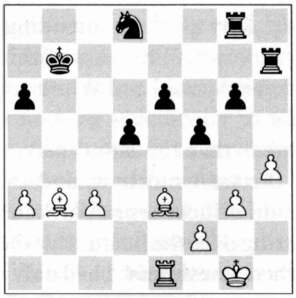
35...bxc5 36.♖g4 ♖fg7 37.♗h6 ♖h7 38.♗e3 f5 39.♖a4

Still under the impression that the bishop was on c8, in which case White would truly have a winning advantage. Given the situation, 39.♖g5 would have been stronger. White still loses the exchange, but he gets excellent compensation, e.g. 39...♘f7 40.♗xc5 ♘xg5 41.hxg5 ♖gh8 42.♔g2 d4 43.♔f3!, with very strong pressure on the black squares. Better is 39...c4, when White plays 40.b3, e.g. 40...cxb3 41.♖b1 or 40...♘f7 41.bxc4 ♘xg5 42.♗xg5 dxc4 43.♖b1+, with excellent compensation.

39...♗xa4

An unpleasant surprise.

40.♗xa4 c4 41.b3 cxb3 42.♗xb3



The time-control had been reached and we needed adjudication. To my amazement, the other simul players, after some brief deliberations, decided to declare the game won for

NEW IN CHESS

Jan Timman's thoughtful and penetrating analyses have always been a major part of New In Chess.

Black. It is true that Black has won the exchange, but White has significant compensation in return. He has the bishop pair and Black's dark squares are especially weak. White is threatening 43.c4, which would open the position and allow the white bishops optimal play. The black knight is passively tied to the defence of e6 and Black will find it difficult enough to activate his rooks.

I remember that the variations on whose strength the win was being claimed started with a king move: 42...♔a8 or 42...♔c8, I forget which, with the idea of activating a rook via b7. After 43.c4! ♖b7 44.♗a2, intending 44...♖b2 45.♖a1=∞, however, White has nothing to fear. The position is opened and White gets Horowitz bishops.

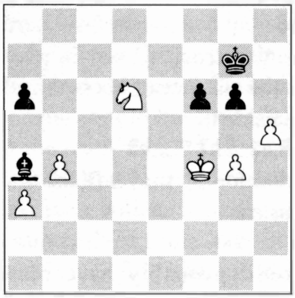
I remember that the simul players got nowhere in the post-mortem, and even found themselves in difficulties as Black in the variations whizzing over the board. But they refused to rectify their assessment: I had only scored 3½ out of 5.

Three years later, Anand played the same blindfold simul. He quickly scored 3-0, but in the other two games, against Krabbé and Van der Vliet, his prospects at the time-control were not great. The arrangement was that I would be the arbiter.

The game against Van der Vliet was easy; Anand may have been slightly worse, but there was no reason to call it anything else than a draw. The endgame against Krabbé was more complicated: it looked difficult for the simul player. I decided to study it more deeply at home and to announce my decision the following day. Two hours of concentrated analysis showed that White (Anand) would just manage to save his skin in a theoretical rook ending a pawn down. This meant that with 4-1 he had scored the best result ever by a blindfold player in the Spui.

That is to say, officially. In my opinion, that year's arbiter would have been entitled to lay claim to the same score three years before, if the arbiters had been prepared to admit that their assessment had been wrong.

The second example is a game against Kasparov.



Kasparov-Timman
Linares 1993
position after 49.♘d6

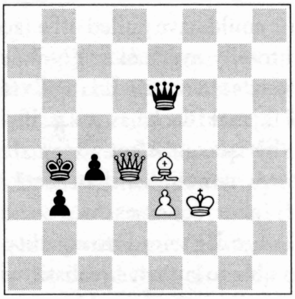
I will be brief about the game itself. After an opening mistake I found myself in a hopeless middle game. With masterful and extremely accurate play, Kasparov manoeuvred himself into a technically winning endgame with an extra pawn. The last phase should not have caused him any problems, but for some reason he started to play superficially. As Speelman observed at the time, the then World Champion had got too used to winning the middle game, and his endgame technique had suffered under this overwhelming superiority. An interesting paradox. Believing that the draw was within reach in the diagrammed position, I played:

49...♗d1??

And Kasparov rounded off the game with a beautiful *petite combinaison*:

50.♘e8+ ♔f7 51.♘xf6! ♔xf6 52.g5+ ♔f7 53.h6 Black resigned. The white king will amble to the queenside, after which Black will have to relinquish his bishop. The way to rescue Black was found in my home during an evening of analysis with Ree, Böhm, Krabbé and Tabe Bas. Back to the diagrammed position. Black should have played 49...♗d7. Kasparov went to great lengths to demonstrate, in *Informator* 57, that White would win regardless. After 50.♘e4 he gives 50...f5 which deserves a ?. Black has to play 50...g5+, with the idea 51.♔f3 ♗c6. After 52.♔e3 ♗d7, 53.h6+ is White's only practical chance, but after 53...♔xh6 54.♘xf6 ♗a4 White won't make any real progress. He remains tied to the defence of the g-pawn.

The third example is from four years later.



Van Wely-Timman
Merrillville 1997
position after 70...♔b4

The same Nimzo-Indian opening line initially led to a quiet battle with a lot of manoeuvring and in which White always looked like having slightly the better chances. Things got hectic when time-trouble struck – we played 40 moves in one and three quarter hours, followed by 30 minutes for the remaining moves.

After the time-control we resumed our careful manoeuvrings, and again White seemed to have the better of it. On move 45 I blundered, handing White all the trumps. 46.♕xb6 looked very strong and I was quite afraid of it. Van Wely now indicated 46...♖d7 47.♕b1, with a large advantage for White, in *Informator* 71. However, I think that 46...♗xe4 47.♕xd8+ ♔h7 is better. Black ends up with piece down, but given his strong centralisation and passed c-pawn, which is not controlled by the white queen's bishop, he should be able to make it to the draw, although this would certainly not have been easy.

Van Wely played differently and got a dangerous attack with queen and a Horowitz bishop pair. Black was forced to hand over an exchange and shelter his king on the queenside. Moves flew thick and fast. White won another pawn, but Black's connected passed pawns started moving. In the diagrammed position Black and White are more or less equal, as Van Wely correctly observes in his comments. But he had only a few seconds left on his clock. The correct move would have been 71.♕d2+, when Black can withdraw his king with 71...♔b5, or he can play 71...c3, e.g. 72.♕d4+ ♕c4 73.♕xc4+ ♔xc4 74.♔e2 ♔b4 75.♔d3 c2 76.♔d2 ♔c4, and White can't win. Van Wely panicked, however, and played 71.♕b6+??, resigning after 71...♕xb6.

Afterwards Van Wely asked me if I would have accepted a draw if he had offered one. I found this question hard to answer. If I remember correctly, he had six seconds left, whereas I had between two and three minutes. I generally don't like playing on in drawn positions in an attempt to win on time, but in this case I would probably have withdrawn the king, because then Black runs no risk at all and White has to be very careful.

Thus far the technical part of this game. Van Wely played very strongly in the rest of the tournament, scoring 3½ out of 4, one point more than me. The tiebreak for the trophy – a kind of Oscar with a black plastic queen on it if my memory serves me right (the plastic piece has broken off in the meantime) – consisted of a five-minute blitz game, which I won.

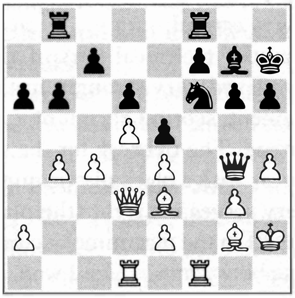
There's nothing spectacular in what I have said so far. These chaotic things happen if you don't use the classical time-control. It got interesting when a journalist of a Dutch morning paper declared, in his weekly chess column, that Van Wely had blundered in time-trouble in a winning position. I met the journalist in question a few days later, on the eve of the world championship tournament in Groningen. I drew his attention to his incorrect assessment, assuming that he would rectify things in his next column. Apparently he was not willing to oblige, with the result that about six months later Van Wely, in an interview with another journalist from a Dutch morning paper, stated that he had been winning before he blundered, quoting the earlier column as evidence.

Was this action of Van Wely's reprehensible? It's hard to answer such a question but it does seem rather opportunistic to manipulate the press in this way. The only other thing I want to say about it is that the discussion – insofar as there was one – remained on a pretty low level because of the refusal of the first journalist to rectify his statement.

The fourth example is from the world championship in Las Vegas.

KI 71.4
Jan Timman
Alexey Fedorov
Las Vegas 1999 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 a6 8.b3 ♖b8 9.♘d5 e6 10.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 11.♗g5 ♕f5 12.♗e3 e5 13.♕d2 ♕h5 14.d5 ♘e7 15.♘g5 h6 16.♘e4 b6 17.h4 ♔h7 18.♖ad1 ♘g8 19.b4 ♗f5 20.f3 ♗xe4 21.fxe4 ♕g4 22.♔h2 ♘f6 23.♕d3



Fedorov's opening approach, especially recapturing with the queen on f6, rather surprised me, but I failed to find a way to refute it. After playing my 16th move I had resigned myself to the draw. Repetition of moves was on the horizon, I would have to draw as Black, and then we'd have the tiebreak. It was a long competition, and sometimes you just have to accept the inevitable.

To my great surprise – and delight – he decided to go for a totally unjustified winning attempt. After 17.h4 White is clearly better. This would probably allow me to act more energetically – 18.b4, as suggested by Fedorov in *Informator* 76, does indeed look stronger than the game move 18.♖ad1 – but I kept a solid grip on the position. My move 20.f3 did not deserve the ?! Fedorov gives it, as White remained slightly better.

Fedorov's manifestly incorrect assessments start with the diagrammed position. Note that two of his comments are so illogical that they lack all rhyme or reason. I will follow this part of the game move by move.

23...a5?

A very bad move, which Fedorov also regards as less good in the sense that he prefers 23...♕d7, when he assesses the position as slightly better for Black. I believe that 23...♕d7 24.♗h3 ♕a4 25.a3 would yield White a slight but lasting plus.

24.bxa5

Here White could have pulled off a tactical coup that I had totally overlooked (Nijboer showed me afterwards), viz. 24.♖xf6 ♗xf6 25.♗h3 ♕h5 26.♗f2, and Black has to sacrifice his bishop to save his queen. After 26...♗xh4 27.gxh4 axb4 Fedorov concludes that Black is clearly better – an incorrect assessment, as 28.♖g1 f5 29.♕g3 ♖g8 30.♖g2! leads to equality, with neither player able to launch a realistic winning attempt. So I believe the text to be stronger, and I will try to prove this.

24...bxa5 25.c5!

The correct moment for a breakthrough. Fedorov gives a totally incomprehensible variation. He does not condemn the text, but indicates 25.♖xf6 ♗xf6 26.♗h3 ♕h5 27.♗f2 as stronger. His variation continues as follows: 27...♗xh4 28.gxh4 ♖b2 29.♖d2 ♖fb8 30.♔g3!? g5!, with unclear play. Maybe this line has some relevance, but if it does I fail to understand why White didn't play 26.bxa5 (instead of 26.♗f2) in the variation indicated under the previous move, transposing to the variation assessed as unclear, instead of going for the variation that is assessed as worse by him, whereas in reality the position is equal. Not that all this is particularly relevant anyway, since the text is just very strong and yields White a virtually winning advantage.

25...♖b2 26.♗f3 ♕c8 27.♕c3?

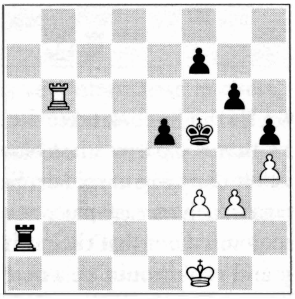
A bad move, ignored by Fedorov. Very strong was the logical 27.♖b1 in order to control the b-file. During the game I was slightly worried about 27...♖xb1 28.♖xb1 ♘g4+ 29.♗xg4 ♕xg4, because 30.♗f2 yields Black good counter-play. But after the subtle 30.♗g1!, followed by 31.♕f3, White is strategically winning.

Like Kasparov six years before, Fedorov must have written his comments in such a way that there was no arguing over his win.

27...♕b7 28.c6 ♕b5 29.♖d2 ♖b4 30.♕d3 ♕a4 31.♖b1 ♖fb8 32.♖xb4 ♖xb4 33.♕c2 ♕b5 34.♕d3 ♕b8 35.♔g2 h5 36.♖c2 ♗h6 37.♗f2 ♖b1 38.♖c3 a4 39.♗a7 ♕b2 40.♖c2 ♕b4 41.♕c3 ♕b5 42.♗f2 ♕b8 43.♕a3 g5 44.hxg5 ♗xg5 45.♗e3 ♕g8 46.♖c1 ♗xe3 47.♕xe3 h4 48.♖xb1 ♕xg3+ 49.♔f1 ♘g4 50.♕g1 ♘h2+ 51.♕xh2 ♕xh2 52.♖b7 ♕h3+ 53.♗g2 ♕e3 54.♖xc7 ♔g7

White resigned.

My last example is the most recent one: Kasparov, who had allowed an almost totally winning endgame to peter out into a draw against Shirov in Linares, and who, shortly before that, had woefully lost an out-and-out draw in a four-against-three rook ending against Piket in the Internet tournament, got the chance to avenge himself in the world championship in London. In the 14th match game, after a quiet opening – the same opening he had used in Leningrad 1986 against Karpov to finally scrape to a draw – he had gradually taken the initiative, finally arriving in an endgame of four against three which he dominated. After Black's 49th move, this was the position:



Kramnik-Kasparov

14th match game, London 2000

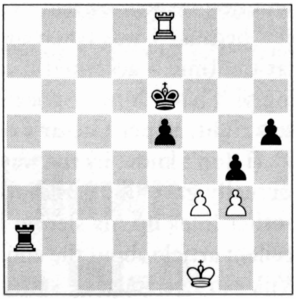
Here Kramnik played **50.♖b7** A move that elicited the following comment in the official matchbook by Keene: 'Surprisingly this move is a mistake. Kramnik should have played 50.♖b8 when his rook has more room to manoeuvre behind Black's king and pawns.' It doesn't say whether it was the decisive mistake. I'll come back to this after the next move.

50...f6 51.♖g7?

But this surely is the decisive mistake. White should have played 51.♖f7!, when Black cannot make any real progress. Black has nothing better than pushing his g-pawn in the long run, which gives rise to the f3-g3 set-up against e5, f6, h5 that I dealt with in my article 'Bad Form' (see New In Chess 2000/4).

51...g5 Of course. Instead of a pawn on f6, Black is now left with a pawn on g5.

52.hxg5 fxg5 53.♖g8 g4 54.♖f8+ ♔e6 55.♖e8+



The critical moment of the endgame has been reached. During the press conference in the Home House Hotel, with the two combatants flanking Sir Jeremy Hanley (the President of 'Brain Games'), this position was the subject of a brief and somewhat bitter debate. Kasparov claimed he had been winning, whereas Kramnik opined that he had had sufficient defensive resources. Now Kramnik had every right to defend himself by referring, like his opponent repeatedly did, to the tight playing schedule; the challenger must have been very tired in this phase of the match, especially because victory had seemed so close before the start of this game.

Kasparov's strong point, however, was that, just as against Karpov in 1984/85, he had grimly continued to fight in a seemingly hopeless situation. In the game itself he had failed to claw back some of the deficit, but now, afterwards, he was most anxious to vent his spleen.

The game continued:

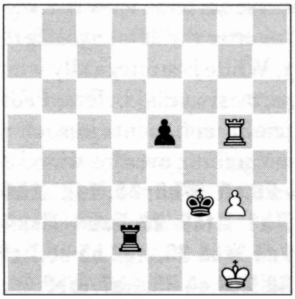
55...♔f5? 56.♖f8+ ♔g6 57.♖g8+ ♔f5

And here Black offered a draw. With the white rook on the bottom rank, the black king has nowhere to run from the checks. If, however, he had played 55...♔f6 in the diagrammed positioned, he would have had. The tournament book indicates the following variation: 55...♔f6 56.♖f8+ ♔e7 57.♖f5 ♔e6 58.fxg4 hxg4 59.♖g5 ♖a4 60.♔f2 ♔f6 61.♖g8 ♔f5 62.♖g7 ♖a2+ 63.♔g1 ♖d2 64.♖g8 ♔e4! 65.♖xg4+ ♔f3 66.♖g8 e4 67.♖f8+ ♔e2, and wins. A long and instructive variation which, incidentally, comes from existing endgame theory.

According to the tournament book, Kramnik later claimed that he could have drawn with 56.♖h8 gxf3 57.♖f8+, followed by 58.♖xf3. Many people, including myself – I had not seen the position yet, because I was taken up by other concerns at the time – accepted this line unquestioningly. That's how it goes: the winner is always right, as per Caesar's old maxim 'Vae Victis'. (I don't know, by the way, whether Kramnik actually gave this variation. He may well have other lines up his sleeve; I remember his excellent article about the ending of our game in Wijk aan Zee 1999: he started by pretending that both of us had seen everything and played perfectly, only then putting things right by highlighting our many technical shortcomings caused by the lack of time.) But the wounded lion is entitled to one last blow. With 56...♖a3! (instead of 56...gxf3) Black can achieve the same technically winning position as in the long variation.

No, very few people were interested. The main thing was that we had a new champion. 'Scoring futile points in a private post-mortem,' Dominic Lawson wrote in *The Inner Game* about one of my comments against Short in San Lorenzo 1993, viz. the crucial blow in the Ruy Lopez Exchange Variation with my early rook sac on a1, which I published in New In Chess 1993/2. Lawson's point is as delightful as it is silly, for I believe that the quest for the truth in an analysis is still the highest aim in chess.

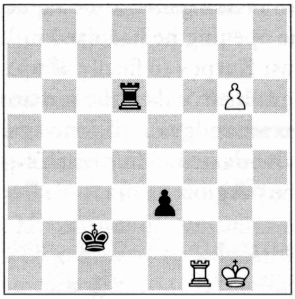
It was only after writing the above that I saw Miguel Illescas's analysis in New In Chess issue 2000/8. Kramnik and Illescas turned out to be right.



During a dinner in the 'Pravda' restaurant in Prague on December 6th, Judit Polgar pointed out to me that after 61.♖g6! (Variation B on page 65) 61...e4 62.♖f6+ ♔e2 63.g4 e3 64.g5 White can just about draw, even if Black plays a king move:

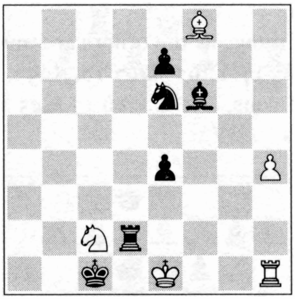
A) 64...♔d3 65.♖d6+ ♔c2 66.♖e6 e2 67.♔f2 ♔d1 68.♔f3, and Black is two tempi short;

B) 64...♔d1. I thought this was the winning move in view of the turn 65.♖f1+ ♔c2 66.♖e1 ♖d1! 67.♔f1 ♔d2, and wins. But White hangs on to the draw with 66.g6 ♖d6



And now 67.♖a1! The rook takes the long side. This means that Kasparov's last blow as Field Marshall is left dangling in midair. So in actual fact this wasn't such an easy piece at all.

Judit also pointed out that the position of the white king and rook would be a nice starting-point for a castling study. Within an hour I converted this idea, first in Budapest and later in Amsterdam, into the following study:



Timman 2000 (with J.Polgar)
White to play and draw

The prelude is a bit clumsy:

1.♗h6 ♗g5 2.♗xg5 ♘xg5 3.0-0+!

The nice point. Since Black was threatening 3...♖d1, there wasn't really any choice.

3...♔xc2 4.hxg5 e3 5.g6 ♖d6 6.♖a1! ♖xg6+ 7.♔f1

Draw.

The fact that Black has a doubled e-pawn is of no consequence; only a tripled pawn would guarantee the win, as Hecht once explained to me in the hoary past.

After the shock of losing his world title, Kasparov was quick to emphasize his continuing status as world no. 1, as he sought to justify his claim to a return match against Kramnik. The high point of his rehabilitation came in early 2001, at Astana in Kazakhstan. Not only did he share first place in the tournament, he also finally managed to crash through Kramnik's Berlin Wall.

Kasparov tears down Kramnik's Berlin Wall

NOTES BY

Yury Dokhoian

RL 7.4
Garry Kasparov
Vladimir Kramnik
Astana 2001 (10)

Situations very often arise in chess, where the fate of an entire tournament is decided at the very last moment, and we sensed that such a moment might occur immediately after the pairings were made, when it transpired that in the last round Garry was due to play White against Vladimir Kramnik.

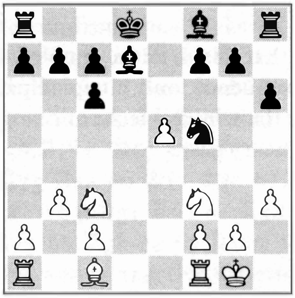
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6

We had practically no doubt that Kramnik would go in for this variation. Contrary to the assertions of some of his helpers, Kramnik has continued playing this variation against players of the most varied styles (whether it be the 'positional' Leko or the 'combinative aggressive' Shirov). And with Kramnik some players have altogether begun avoiding going into this, his favourite endgame (one can recall his games with Ivanchuk and Anand). Here it should be mentioned that in the first game of the mini-match with Kramnik, we were able to uphold the honour of the Grünfeld Defence in the variation that brought him success in the match in London. Now it was also important for us to show that in the so-called 'Berlin Wall' Black faces a difficult battle for equality.

4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.♘c3 h6

Right from the start in this endgame, every move, both for White and for Black, has its implications, taking the play along definite lines, typical only of that move.

10.h3 ♗d7 11.b3



11...♔e8

It is Black's king (or more correctly its placing) that really determines the character of the subsequent play. With it at c8 the play is sharper, but the weakness of the kingside and the inactivity of the rook at a8 are felt. The position of the king at e8 is more passive and it usually involves different plans for moving the remaining pieces, than when it is at c8. The main idea of the move in the game is to exchange the usually inactive rook at a8 for the rook at d1. The drawback to the plan is that Black's king remains in the centre and prevents the other rook at h8 from coming into play.

12.♗b2 ♖d8 13.♖ad1 ♘e7

This manoeuvre is typical of the endgame as a whole: the knight moves via e7 to g6 and prevents White from advancing his kingside pawns.

14.♖fe1 ♘g6 15.♘e4

Usually such an arrangement of the white pieces is most effective when the black king is at e8. The placing of the rook at e1 and the king at e8 force Black to watch very carefully for the e5-e6 breakthrough, which normally leads to a sharp activation of the white pieces.

15...♘f4?!

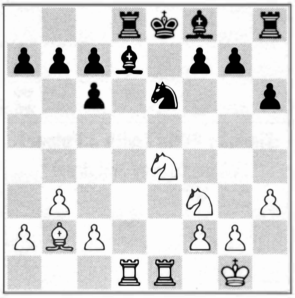
It is hard to think of a more obvious move than this knight manoeuvre to the key e6-square. Once the knight occupies it, Black's position will be consolidated, and this applies especially to the black king at e8. In short, White must not delay.

16.e6!

The key pawn sacrifice, releasing the energy of the white pieces, in particular the bishop at b2 and rook at e1.

16...♘xe6

The only move, as the others are much worse: 16...♗xe6? 17.♘f6+ ♔e7 18.♗a3+ ♔xf6 19.♖xd8 and wins, or 16...fxe6 17.♗e5 and White dominates.



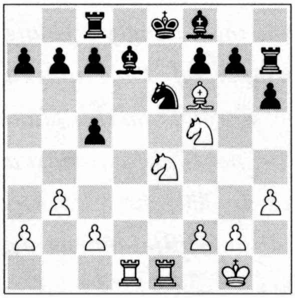
17.♘d4

This looks the most natural, but 17.♗e5! was possibly more energetic. Now after 17...♖c8 (no better is 17...♗c8 18.♘f6+ ♔e7 19.♘h4 g6 20.♘d7! ♖xd7 21.♖xd7+ ♗xd7 22.♗xh8 f6 23.♘xg6+ ♔f7 24.♘xf8 ♘xf8 25.♖d1) 18.♘h4! looks very strong, and White has very strong threats involving the advance of his f-pawn. The difficulty in finding 18.♘h4 during the game was aggravated by the fact that this knight manoeuvre (and Garry saw it) does not work immediately: after 17.♘h4?! ♗c8 the combination 18.♘f6+ gxf6 19.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 20.♗xf6+ ♗e7 leaves the knight at h4 'hanging'.

17...c5

This decision took Kramnik about an hour, and for the moves remaining to the control he only had some 18 minutes left – the portent of inevitable time trouble. After other continuations White would also have retained the initiative, for example: 17...♖h7 18.f4 c5 (18...♗e7 19.♘f5 ♗c8 20.♘xe7 ♖xd1 21.♖xd1 ♔xe7 22.f5 ♘f4 23.f6++–) 19.♘f3 ♗c6 20.♖b1! (it is important to defend the bishop at b2 in the event of operations on the a1-h8 diagonal) 20...♗xe4 (20...♗e7? 21.f5) 21.♖xe4 g6 22.g4 ♔d7 (22...♖d5 23.c4 ♖d3 24.♘e1; 22...♗g7 23.f5!± – this is where the rook comes in useful!) 23.♘e5+ ♔c8 24.♘xg6 with advantage to White, or 17...♗c8 18.♘f6+ (18.♘xe6!? ♖xd1 19.♘xc7+ ♔d8 20.♖xd1+ ♔xc7 21.♗e5+ ♔b6 22.♖d8) 18...gxf6 19.♘xe6 ♖xd1 20.♘g7+ ♔d7 21.♖xd1+ ♗d6 22.♗xf6±.

18.♘f5 ♖h7 19.♗f6 ♖c8



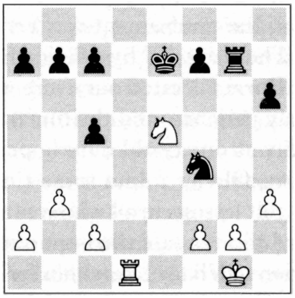
20.♗xg7?!

In Garry's words, here his preceding game with Sadvakasov played a cruel trick on him. At one point he had the possibility of taking the a5 pawn with his queen (which for him looked too 'utilitarian', grabbing material) and gaining good winning chances. With the move in the game White regains the sacrificed pawn, but in so doing he loses the greater part of his advantage.

Stronger was 20.f4! ♗c6 21.♘fg3!? (21.♗h4 ♗xe4 22.♖xe4 g6 23.♘e3 ♗e7 24.♗xe7 ♔xe7 25.♘d5+ ♔f8 26.♘f6 ♖h8 27.♖d7 c4 28.♖xc4 ♔g7 29.♘d5 c6?! 30.f5 gxf5 31.♘e7±) 21...g6 (21...♗d6 22.♘xd6+ cxd6 23.f5 gxf6 24.fxe6 ♖g7 – 24...d5 25.e7 h5 26.♘f5 ♔d7 27.c4 d4 28.b4 b6 29.b5 ♗a8 30.♘xd4+– – 25.♘f5 ♖xg2+ 26.♔f1 fxe6 27.♖xd6 ♔f7 28.♖dxe6±) 22.c4 (22.f5 gxf5 23.♘xf5↑) 22...b6 23.f5 gxf5 24.♘xf5, and the white pieces dominate.

20...♗xg7 21.♘xg7+ ♖xg7 22.♘f6+ ♔e7 23.♘xd7 ♖d8 24.♘e5 ♖xd1 25.♖xd1 ♘f4

Black would not have solved all his problems by 25...♘d4 26.♔h2, when 26...♘xc2 is bad because of 27.♖d7+ ♔e6 28.♖xc7.



26.♔h1!

A difficult move and the best winning attempt. Black can defend in the event of 26.♘g4 ♘xh3+ 27.gxh3 h5 28.f3 f5 29.♔f2 hxg4 30.hxg4 fxg4 31.♖g1 c4!?, or 26.♔f1 ♘xg2 27.♖d7+ ♔e6 28.♖xf7 ♖xf7 29.♘xf7 ♘f4.

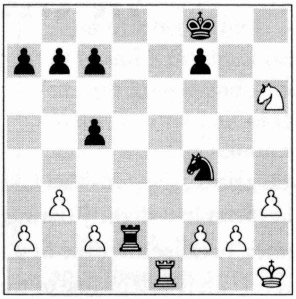
26...♖g5

Black plays for the activation of his rook. If 26...♔e6 the simple 27.♘g4 is good.

27.♘g4 ♖d5 28.♖e1+! With the rooks on, White retains the initiative. An unclear ending arises after 28.♖xd5 ♘xd5 29.♘xh6 ♘b4 30.♘f5+ ♔e6 31.♘e3 ♘xa2 32.h4 b5.

28...♔f8 29.♘xh6 ♖d2

Kramnik already had very little time left on his clock, and it seems to me that he underestimated the strength of White's 30th move. Sharp play would have arisen after 29...♔g7 30.♘g4 ♖d2 31.♖e4 ♘e6 32.c3!? (White begins playing for an attack) 32...♖xa2 33.f4 ♖b2 34.f5 ♘d8 35.♖e8 ♘c6 36.h4 ♖xb3 37.h5 ♖xc3 38.h6+ ♔h7 39.♖f8 with decisive threats for White.



30.♖e5! On the fifth rank the white rook is ideally placed.

30...♖xf2? This loses quickly. Black had a not altogether pleasant choice between 30...♔g7 31.♖f5 ♔xh6 32.♖xf4 ♖xc2 33.♖xf7 ♖xa2 34.♖xc7 (34.g4!?) 34...b6 35.f4 with good winning chances, and possibly the best defence 30...♖xc2!? 31.♖f5 ♖xf2 32.♘g4 ♖xg2 33.♖xf4 ♖xa2 with a more favourable version for Black of the position from the game.

31.♖f5 ♔g7 32.♘g4 ♖xg2 33.♖xf4 ♖xc2 34.♖f2 ♖c3 35.♔g2 b5 36.h4 c4 37.h5 cxb3 38.axb3 ♖c5 39.h6+ ♔f8 40.♘f6 ♖g5+ 41.♔h1

Black resigned.

A very complicated game, not only in the opening, but also in the middlegame and even in the endgame. I hope that further analysis of the key moments will enable a clearer understanding and a more definite evaluation to be gained of certain critical positions, which arose or could have arisen in the course of this grandiose encounter.

Over the New In Chess years, chess has become increasingly a young man's game. But at least one player has defied that trend. The remarkable Viktor Kortchnoi, born in 1931, has already been around on this planet three times as long as New In Chess. And he continues to show remarkable stamina, fighting spirit and pure chess strength. In 2001, he celebrated his 70th birthday with a decisive win in the traditional Biel tournament, ahead of a field of players young enough to be his grandchildren. One of those, Peter Svidler, reported the event for New In Chess 2001/6.

'Once again the youngest player in the tournament'

Peter Svidler

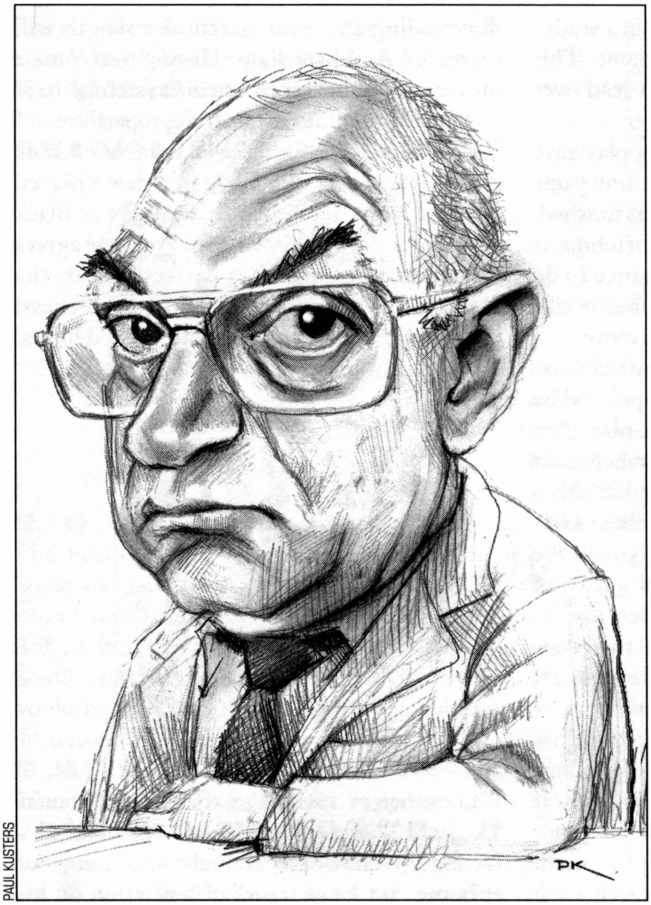
At first glance, the 34th Biel Chess Festival was just one more Category 16 tournament – maybe even a slightly boring one, considering the modern obsession with decisive games, because after the first two rounds little enough blood was shed. However, I am certain it will be one of the landmark tournaments of the modern era – and all because of the outstanding achievements of its winner, Viktor Kortchnoi.

The organizers of the Biel festival stuck with their familiar format – a full round robin with 6 players – but they did change last year's field somewhat. After I'd written in New In Chess last year that I had one tournament secured for 2001, they could hardly avoid inviting me, and Boris Gelfand was back, hoping to improve his slightly below-par result in 2000. The other four were Joel Lautier, playing his third event of the summer after qualifying from Ohrid and coming second in Clichy, Alexander Grischuk – the spearhead of the new generation, and two Swiss players – Yannick Pelletier, who also played in Biel 1999, and the most important player of all – Viktor Kortchnoi.

By the way – this line-up had one amusing consequence: the grandmaster tournament was unilingual – everybody spoke Russian. For four players Russian is their mother tongue, and Joel, should he choose to do so, can pass for a Russian even amongst Russians – I've seen him do it myself. The fact that Yannick speaks good Russian as well is less known. I believe this was the first such tournament I've played in outside Russia.

As usual, the tournament was very well organized. The team led by Olivier Breisacher and Peter Burri tolerated our every whim with near-saintly patience, and the tournament ran as smoothly as one could only hope. Even on the rest day, Olivier found some time to give free mini-golf lessons to all who wanted them.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the participation of Viktor Kortchnoi for the Swiss organizers. Over the years, he has done a lot for the development and popularisation of chess in his country, and his name-recognition should be somewhere around 90% – even the pool hustlers I tried to challenge to a game of 9-ball all asked



PAUL KUSTERS

The inimitable Viktor Kortchnoi, still winning tournaments in his 70s.

me about him when I said I was a *Schachspieler*. He hasn't played in Biel lately – rumours say that the stage of the Congress Hall was too hot for him (and I have to say it was quite warm in there last year). But this year the tournament moved to the CTS Center, a modern-looking building with air-conditioning(!), and that settled it.

The pundits were unanimous – anyone who cared to offer his prognosis said that Pelletier would get a good hiding and that Kortchnoi should be content with a 50% score. Well, we were all in for a big surprise.

In the first two rounds, 5 out of 6 games were decisive. Probably running on the remains of last year's adrenaline, I won my first two games – out-preparing Alexander Grischuk in Round 1 and displaying a great knack for intuitive-primitive chess versus Joel in Round 2. But so did Viktor – one of whose wins was his first-round game, as Black, against Boris Gelfand, who rebounded by beating Pelletier in Round 2. From that point on, the tournament was a Swiss-only show.

In Round 3, Pelletier beat Kortchnoi, who tried very hard to complicate a boring and somewhat worse position, only to blunder the whole game when equality – and chances for more – were only a couple of accurate moves away. This gave me the lead by proxy – but it did not last too long. In the next round I failed to achieve anything with white against Viktor, and had to settle for a draw, while in Round 5 Yannick severely punished my – for want of a better term – 'dubious' play and Kortchnoi beat Lautier in a prolonged endgame struggle. With the first half of the tournament over, Kortchnoi was on top with +2, and Pelletier and yours truly were tied for 2nd on +1.

Yannick Pelletier's performance deserves a special mention. He had prepared for this event – probably the strongest he's ever played in – extremely well, and played very well throughout. Solid opening preparation, sensible time management, and fighting spirit should have given him a higher place in the final table, but for his collapse during the last rounds. Nonetheless, his effort has certainly earned him a lot of new respect.

Boris Gelfand was 4th on 50% – his play lacked energy, and his victory over Pelletier was to be his only one, while Grischuk and Lautier were an unlikely last-place duo on –2. All of us had hopes for a better second half.

The tournament proceeded peacefully for a couple of rounds – this year Biel saw a clear triumph of defence over initiative. Then, in Round 8, Kortchnoi exacted his revenge on Pelletier in a wild game in which Yannick, after defending a very difficult position very well for a very long time, blundered in time-trouble... only to be given a second lease of life by Kortchnoi – and to fail to capitalize on it in a study-like opposite-coloured bishops endgame. This victory gave Kortchnoi a full-point lead over me. But the intrigue was far from over.

In Round 9, Viktor's risky opening play gave Joel Lautier the chance to play an exciting game – and he obliged. When this game was finished, I realized that I'd catch up with Kortchnoi if I beat Pelletier – and I got every chance to do so. However, when all the hard work was over, I managed to blow it with one careless move.

The last round was a bit of an anti-climax. Both Viktor and I were hugely disappointed by the events of the previous night. He played an ultra-solid line of the Grünfeld, and when most of the pieces had come off we called it a day. Joel, inspired by his victory, almost beat Gelfand with black, but Boris eventually held the position, while Grischuk gambled and won against a somewhat exhausted Pelletier.

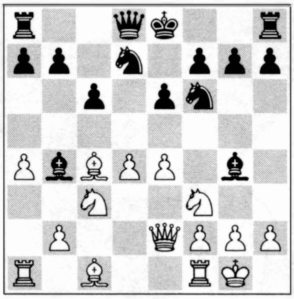
In the end, the +2 that Kortchnoi had scored after the first five rounds was enough for clear 1st place. Winning a Category 16 event at the age of 70 is impressive enough in itself, but Viktor has done even more – once again he was the youngest player in the tournament by far. Looking at his play, you might be tempted to exclaim something along the lines of 'This lad's play is still very uneven – but by God he will play well when he matures!' Well, let us hope maturity won't catch him at all. At the press conference on the second rest day, Viktor said that he's planning to play chess – and by that he means playing well, of course, and winning tournaments - until he's 80. Coming from anybody else this would be bragging – but somehow I've no doubt that he'll be able to do that. I just hope I'll be there to watch it happen...

NOTES BY

Viktor Kortchnoi

SL 5.2
Boris Gelfand
Viktor Kortchnoi
Biel 2001 (1)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4
I often tell my pupils the following maxim, learnt from older grandmasters: 'When you learn a new opening and apply it – your understanding and your practical strength will increase.' And here I am! Having overcome a measure of abhorrence of this system, I have now included it into my opening repertoire.
5.a4 ♗f5 6.e3 e6 7.♗xc4 ♗b4 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♕e2 ♗g4!? I first met this move in a game played about 55 years ago by Vasily Smyslov as Black against Samuel Reshevsky. Not everyone agrees nowadays, but to me it is perfectly clear: the 20th century grandmasters understood chess! We still digest the stuff that they cooked for us.
10.e4 Something new – a pawn sacrifice!

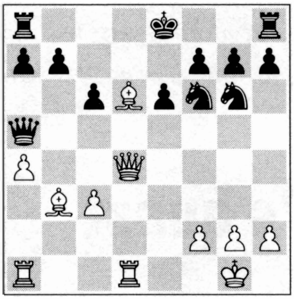


10...♘b6 11.♗b3
If 11.e5 then 11...♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♕xd4, of course.
11...♗xf3 12.♕xf3 ♕xd4 13.♖d1 ♕e5 14.♗f4
Gelfand has obviously thought everything out at home. Yet I saw traces of hesitation on his face. Probably because he discovered holes in his home analysis over the board...
14...♕h5 15.♕d3 Because of Black's misplaced pieces – ♗b4, ♘b6 – White has some compensation for the pawn, but not much.
15...♘bd7
I made this move quickly, overlooking White's unpleasant reply. More solid, I think, would be 15...e5. At home I tried to refute 15...e5 with 16.♕g3. I failed – after 16...exf4 17.♕xg7 ♕g6! the white assault would come to a dead stop.
16.e5!
Practically speaking the strongest move. It looks as if Black has been lucky enough to have emerged from the complications with a material plus. But the black position looked pretty hairy for a while...
16...♘xe5 17.♕d4 ♗xc3 18.bxc3
Or 18.♕xc3 ♘g6 19.♗d6 ♘e4 20.♕xg7 ♘xd6 21.♖xd6 ♕e5 22.♕xe5 ♘xe5 23.f4 ♘d7 24.f5 ♘c5 25.♗c4 ♔e7, or 21.♗xe6 ♕e5 22.♗xf7+

♘xf7 23.♖e1 0-0-0 24.♖xe5 ♘fxe5 – in both cases White has to struggle for survival.

18...♘g6 19.♗d6 ♕a5

The only move, but not a very difficult one – Black is threatening to castle queenside!



20.♗c5

The best. 20.♗b4 was not satisfactory because of 20...♕e5 21.♕c4 ♘d5. 20.♗a3 wasn't too dangerous for Black either: 20...♖d8 21.♕e3?! ♕b6! 22.♕g3 ♕xb3 23.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 24.♕b8+ ♔d7 25.♕d6+ ♔c8. Better would be 21.♕c4 ♘d5 22.♖ab1!, maintaining the tension.

20...b6 21.♗b4?!

After the game my opponent suggested 21.♗a3 as an improvement. Correct! One point of the move becomes clear in the following line: 21...♕e5 22.♕xe5 ♘xe5 23.a5 c5? 24.axb6 axb6 25.♗xc5!, and White wins. Well, ...c6-c5 was wrong. And, needless to say, after 23...b5 White has many ways to develop his initiative, starting from 24.a6 or 24.c4. So the most solid move for Black is 23...♘g6, when White has many tempting ways to continue his assault – only most of them don't work. Say, 24.axb6 axb6 25.♗b4 ♖xa1 26.♖xa1 c5! – the h8 rook is protected by knight g6! Or 24.♗d6 ♘e4 25.♗b4 c5 26.axb6 cxb4 27.♗a4+ ♔e7 28.♗c6 ♘xc3 29.♖d7+ ♔f6 30.♗xa8 b3, with advantage for Black. In order to reach equality White has to play 24.♗c2! c5 25.axb6 axb6 26.♗xg6 hxg6 27.♗xc5 ♖xa1 28.♖xa1 ♔d7 29.♗xb6.

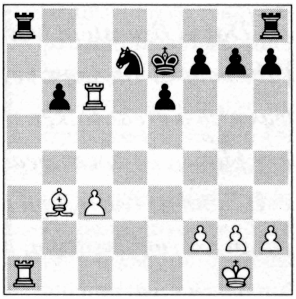
21...♕e5 22.♕xe5 ♘xe5 23.♗d6

This move is forced because of the threat ...c6-c5.

23...♘ed7 24.a5 ♘e4 25.axb6

This does not work either: 25.♗b4 c5 26.♗a4 0-0-0, or even 26.axb6 axb6 27.♗a4 0-0-0.

25...♘xd6 26.♖xd6 ♔e7 27.♖xc6 axb6



Black has emerged from the complications with an extra pawn. But it's not yet clear whether this endgame is winning.

28.♖b1 ♖hc8 29.♗a4 ♘c5 30.♗b5 ♖xc6 31.♗xc6 ♖a2 31...♖a3 was more accurate.

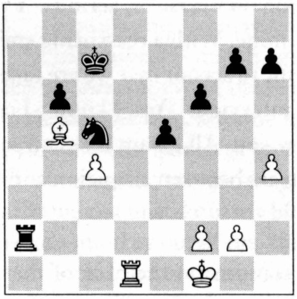
32.h4 ♔d8 With this trick Black succeeds in protecting pawn b6 with his king – 33.♖xb6 fails to 33...♔c7.

33.♖d1+ ♔c7 34.♗e8 It can be useful for White to weaken Black's seventh rank.

34...f6 35.♗b5 ♖a3 36.c4 e5 Black already has a plan in mind – to create a passed e-pawn.

37.♔f1 After 37.♔h2 Black could start carrying out his plan at once: 37...♘d3 38.f3 f5, etc.

37...♖a2



38.♖d5?!

In time-trouble White commits a final inaccuracy. He had to continue 38.f3, preventing ...e5-e4. And then, if 38...g6 – 39.♖d5 ...

38...e4 39.h5 h6 40.♔g1 More stubborn was 40.g3 – the white king had to remain in the centre.

40...♖a3 Black is threatening ...♖d3. If the white rook now retreats to d1 or d2, ...♘d3 will be very strong.

41.♔h2 ♖d3 42.♖f5 ♔d6 43.♖f4 ♔e5 44.♖g4 ♘e6 45.♗c6 ♘g5 46.f4+ ♔f5 47.♖h4 ♘e6 48.g4+ ♔xf4 49.g5+ ♔xg5 50.♖xe4 ♘d4

White resigned.

The late David Bronstein was always a byword for creativity in chess, and ranks with Tal as one of the most beloved players of the latter half of the 20th century. He was also a great talker, whose fanatical love of chess made him the friend of every player, however weak or strong, throughout the world. Life dealt him a difficult hand at times, and in his later years, a sense of bitterness was clearly evident in his conversation, but even so, he could entrance like no other player.

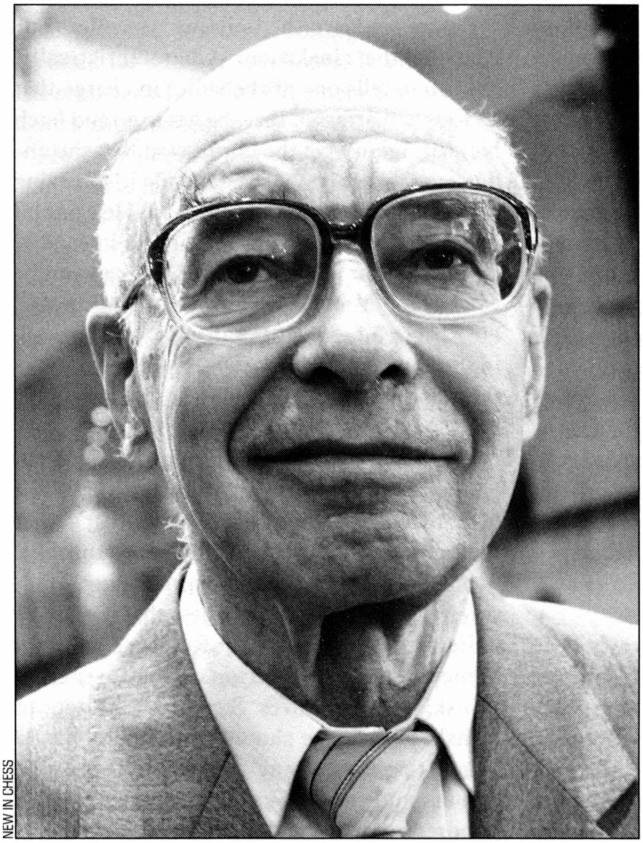
David Bronstein's quest for creativity

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Although we haven't met for several years, David Bronstein has no patience for formalities. 'You ask me how I am. I could say that I am fine, but then I would be lying. But I'm still walking around.' And taking me by the elbow, he walks briskly to a quiet corner of the playing hall. The expression on his face is serious. 'I've got bad news for you', he says as he sadly lifts his eyes to look into mine. With a reassuring smile I reply: 'Yes, I know.' For a moment he hesitates, finding it difficult to accept that we are talking about the same bad news. Then he says: 'I cannot give you an interview.' 'Yes, I know', I continue to reassure him. 'But don't worry, I don't want to interview you. All I want is spend some time with you, come to your home, and talk.' His stare wavers between suspicion and relief, and I add: 'But I will write about it, of course.'

We're standing at the back of the vast playing hall in the Kremlin, where the FIDE world championship has reached the quarter finals. Bronstein's appearance has not remained unnoticed. A middle-aged gentleman timidly comes up to him asking for an autograph. Much to my surprise, Bronstein flatly refuses. I'm slightly taken aback by his refusal. 'Why should I give an autograph?', he explains. 'I'm not playing here. Ilyumzhinov has given several players a wild card to the championship, but it hasn't occurred to him that he might also invite me. After all, I'm living in Moscow and I might have beaten quite a few of the participants.' I have no reason to doubt him. Bronstein may be 77 now, but his mind is still youthfully agile.

We return to the subject of the interview he doesn't want to give either. It's an old story. Ten years ago, in the summer of 1991, I went to visit him in the Brussels hotel where he was staying with his wife Tatyana, during the Candidates' matches. The previous day he had told me that he was ready to talk and invited me to a typical Russian lunch with ample food and drink in his hotel room. As it was, I didn't get to ask any questions and we barely touched the food and drinks that were sitting on a table as a silent reminder of a conversation that wasn't to be. When I knocked on their door, David and Tatyana sat glued to the television set, trying to



NEW IN CHESS

David Bronstein – insistent to the end that chess is not a difficult game!

get all the information they could about the attempted military coup in Moscow that would dominate the world news for several days. It was they who asked the questions, and when I finally took my leave I had done little except patiently translating the news flashes on Belgian and Dutch television.

In the years that followed Bronstein kept ducking my further requests, referring resignedly to our missed opportunity in Brussels. So now his bad news can hardly unsettle me. But there is a glimmer of hope. He knew I was in Moscow and has come to meet me. He mulls over the compromise I have suggested. 'Okay,' he says half-heartedly, 'but don't portray me as a disgruntled old man.' It's a request that he will repeat more than once today and in the coming days, particularly when he feels, rightly, that he has been complaining again. 'Don't get me wrong', he will say. 'Of course I've had a hard and bitter life, but how could I complain when so many of my compatriots have had much tougher lives? At least, I could travel and see something of the world, apart from the years when I was not allowed to go abroad. I could buy a nice tweed jacket or a fine shirt in England, luxuries that they could only dream of.' And every time I tell him that I would not waste my time with him if I regarded him as some whiney old geezer who cribs about everything modern. The person I am interested in is one of the most creative grandmasters in the history of chess, who also happens to be a kind and gentle man with a wide range of other interests.

Of course, saying that David Bronstein doesn't complain would be way off the truth. In fact, he has a few stock complaints that you can hardly blame him for. His first complaint is that people never tire of reminding him of the unique chance he missed in the 1951 world championship match against Botvinnik, when he dramatically let the Patriarch escape with a tie and the title, after he had been a point up with only two games to go. 'They tell me that not winning that last game against Botvinnik was the biggest mistake in my life. They're trying to make a monkey out of me, the one who played 12-12. As if I did nothing else in my career. I played so many competitions and gave exhibitions in most of the republics, which meant something to these people. Not because I was a champion, but because I let them enjoy chess.'

The other milestone in his career that he is sick and tired of hearing about is the book he wrote on the Zurich 1953 Interzonal, a classic which is almost unanimously hailed as one of the absolute highlights in chess literature. 'People come up to me and think they can please me by saying how much they liked this book. And I ask them if they have the feeling that they themselves have learned something over the past years.'

While we are leaving the FIDE championship he embarks on one of his other favourite topics, the alleged complexity of chess. 'It's a myth which I believe originated with Alekhine and Capablanca. At that time there were not that many strong players and they were held in tremendous esteem. Which suited them fine, so they began to cultivate this idea of an incredibly difficult game. This assumption has survived to this day. Kasparov says that only very few top players have this smell for chess.' He touches his nose in mock arrogance and continues, 'What nonsense. Chess is an easy game to learn. I remember a lecture I gave for a gathering of executives at Hewlett Packard. I told them that I couldn't believe it. We put a man on the moon, but we still play chess.' He looks at me, smiling expectantly: 'That was not an introductory remark they had expected from a chess grandmaster.'

He is not a great friend of Kasparov's. The simuls that Kasparov plays against national teams don't impress him: 'These opponents cannot play normally. There's always this feeling that there is something behind their backs. I could play like that against Kasparov, Kramnik and Anand, why not?' He is equally dismissive of the match Kasparov and Kramnik are playing in the Hall of Columns: 'It's shameless to play for 500.000 dollars in a city where the average citizen makes 200 dollars a month. If they really wanted to do something let them play at six boards simultaneously against each other like I did and offer the spectators some entertainment.' Again I feel tempted to raise some objection, but wisely remain silent.

As we walk down the stairs of the Kremlin congress centre, he points at the portraits of the World Champions that have been hung there for the occasion: 'I don't belong in this gallery of great chess names. I've always been different, always gone my own way. Actually I am glad that I didn't become World Champion, because then my picture would also be there. It's like a prison. You're World Champion and people see you as a statistic. That's why I also hate these encyclopaedias. They give your birth year, the year you died and your results. I'm more than just a few numbers. I'm not Zurich '53 and 12-12.'

Before we leave the building we collect our coats in the cloakroom. Characteristically, Bronstein tells one of the ladies in charge that he feels embarrassed that she has to go and fetch his coat. I don't get the impression that she understands what he means. Outside it's freezing cold, somewhere around minus 15. He's put on gloves and an imposing fur hat and looks disapprovingly at my bare head: 'How can you be so careless? You should look after your brain.' He is right, of course, but it's only a short walk to the entrance of the metro, where we take the train to the Kropotkinskaya station close to his home.

He's still not sure that it's such a good plan to go there. His flat is in disorder and is hardly a place to receive a guest. But, oh well, that's what I wanted, so let's go. Bronstein lives on the third floor of a well-kept apartment building. With two rooms and a kitchen I guess that it must be quite a reasonable place for Russian standards. Sometimes his wife Tatyana comes over from Minsk, where she lives. Sometimes he goes to Minsk. Perhaps he should settle there, but in Minsk there is nothing for him. Before we go into his study he shows me the boxes filled with hundreds of maps and folders that he keeps in his bedroom, part of the chaos that drives Tatyana to despair when she stays in Moscow. He randomly takes out a few folders containing his correspondence with Euwe, newspaper clippings, letters from organizers and many more things that I would love to have a closer look at. Most of his books he keeps in his study, which is far less chaotic than he wanted me to believe, although here too, side-tables are stacked high with clippings and letters. On the couch he keeps several notebooks containing literally hundreds of telephone numbers and addresses of people he has met on his travels or who have written to him asking him for some kind of favour.

As I begin my inspection of his book shelves, he starts picking up magazines and books that he wants to show. In a report of one of his exhibitions in an American magazine he has marked a passage in which the writer stresses how delighted the amateur chess players were by the attention that the visiting grandmaster lavished on them. The simul finished at 2 a.m., but

Bronstein had continued talking to anyone interested for another two hours. In conclusion the reporter writes that Bronstein was not only a great chess personality but also a great person.

He's also proud about an article that the Russian sports magazine *Sport Ekspress* dedicated to his 75th birthday. Well, not about everything that is written in it, but certainly about the heading: 'David Bronstein, The Virus of Freedom'.

Once he starts showing me noteworthy passages, the room seems to be full with books and magazines that have been waiting for this moment. In a pre-war Dutch chess magazine he finds an announcement for a tournament where the players will get 20 minutes for the entire game: 'You see, these quicker time-controls weren't my invention at all. In Holland they already played like this in the twenties.' Bronstein has always been a staunch advocate of faster time-controls. 'Many years ago I began to write down how much time I spent on my moves and afterwards checked the connection between the quality of the moves and the speed at which they were made. I found that generally you play better when you follow your intuition.'

'I'm more than just a few numbers. I'm not Zurich '53 and 12-12.'

There are many other books besides the ones on chess. English literature, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, books on art, politics and history randomly fill the shelves. He picks out an old manual of mathematics. 'I bow deeply to these people, because they made progress in their field. But what new is there to be discovered in chess? I've always had a great admiration for science, but I ended up in chess because I could play well. It's a trap. Chess should give people pleasure.'

And he starts telling how he explained in a beginners' book that he is still proud of, but which his admirers never mention, how you should see the chess board. Essentially, there are eight ranks of which White occupies four and Black three. The fifth rank is normally vacant. 'It's like a soccer field. If you want to attack you have to cross the middle line, the equator. That's how I played.' And in one go he opens an old chess book and shows a picture of Labourdonnais. With twinkling eyes he says: 'I like the way he looks and the way he played. I've always said that I was a pupil of Labourdonnais.' The twinkle disappears when I ask if he himself has had any followers: 'No, I don't have any followers. No one looks at chess like I did. These youngsters are only playing for money.'

And almost in the same breath he switches to Botvinnik: 'What was so special about what I did? Just because I showed that I could play against Botvinnik, which no one felt was possible. After the draw in the first game of the match people were impressed that I had managed to draw against the great Botvinnik. They were even more surprised when there was another draw and then two more. They say that Keres might have been World Champion. I found a book from before the War in which he writes that he cannot imagine that he will ever play successfully against Botvinnik. Such awe. How could you ever become World Champion then? The only thing I did was show that it was possible.' And in a resigned voice he adds: 'And so if you don't win this match you are not one of these great champions. Because of half a point.'

He walks over to the cupboard opposite his library and opens a door. There are various editions of all the books he has written. 'Yes, these are my books. But what significance do they have? Of course, I know that there are people who admire me, but what's that to me? It's some vacuum, it's somewhere else, because I don't know these people.'

On the central table sits an impressive new computer. Together with Russian journalist Sergey Voronkov he is working on a new book, reminiscences about his travels and annotations to all the games he played against computers in the Aegon tournaments in The Hague. 'I'm writing this book out of gratitude to my friends in Holland, for their hospitality. What do you think, will anyone be interested?'

The next day Bronstein comes to pick me up at the Kropotkinskaya metro station. On the phone I had stressed that there was no such need, as I would easily find my way to his home, but he wouldn't hear of it. When I get off the train I understand why. In his hands he has an extra pair of gloves and a woolly hat. Back home he immediately heads for a stack of clippings and other items he has selected to show to me. Contained in a red leather folder is a diploma that he received from the City of Moscow on the occasion of his 60th birthday. It was accompanied by 200 dollars and fills him with visible pride, most likely because it still dates from Soviet times, when the society he feels he served had not yet collapsed to be replaced by a cruel kind of capitalism that has left the country without free medical care and education. When he turned 75, he was presented with a similar diploma, signed by Mayor Luzhkov, which seems to have less significance for him.

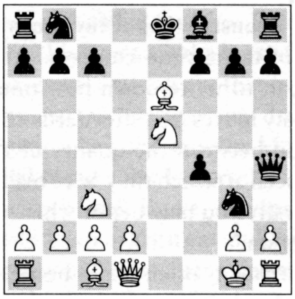
The next item is a newspaper with Karpov on the front page. 'Look, this was published in a special extra edition immediately after Fischer had failed to meet FIDE's deadline for the world championship match. Here it reads, Karpov World Champion.' With subdued sarcasm he comments: 'And all this attention for him getting the title without playing.'

One of the folders contains letters from Keres. I ask whether he and Keres were friends. He thinks briefly and then replies: 'They sometimes say that you have to share dinner with someone for 40 years before you can say that you are friends. Let me say that I forgave him for playing for two years in wartime Germany, a country that persecuted the Jews. I forgave him, but I don't have the feeling that Keres understood that I did.'

Somehow I get the impression that he mentions Keres so often out of some strange kind of rivalry, because the Estonian, more than anyone else, is seen as a tragic victim of history who might have been World Champion if his life had been less burdensome. Perhaps this reputation is painful to Bronstein, who has had his own share of sadness and sorrow. When I make a remark to that effect, he reacts instantly: 'I don't understand why they think Keres so tragic. There were so many countries where I never played a normal tournament and where he went three or four times. And all the privileges he had in Tallinn. When after the war people discussed who might fight for the vacant world title he was mentioned often enough. I wasn't, but in all important competitions I finished ahead of him and I beat him in all our crucial encounters.'

In the kitchen the Russian lunch that we failed to enjoy in 1991 is waiting, but before we move there Bronstein suggests that he show me a game. That's what he likes to do, divert people with the joy that the beauty of chess can give. Gratefully I accept his proposal and we sit down at a fine Staunton set, a replica of the set Fischer and Spassky played with, presented to him on a visit to Reykjavik. He briefly hesitates which game to show and then plays the moves of a miniature he won with the black pieces as a fourteen-year-old:

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘h5 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗c4 dxe5 7.♘xe5 ♕h4+ 8.♔f1 ♗e6 9.♗xe6 ♘g3+ 10.♔g1



10...♗c5+ 11.d4 ♗xd4+ 12.♕xd4 ♘e2+ 13.♘xe2 ♕e1 Mate.

With a smile he recalls the pleasure he felt when he discovered an original mating combination that he had never seen before.

After he has returned the pieces to their initial positions, we remain sitting at the chess board. Curious about some other games from his career, I cautiously hint at the often discussed dramatic developments in the last two games of his match against Botvinnik. For a moment he doesn't seem to hear, but then he suddenly half-exclaims: 'Of course I was afraid to beat Botvinnik! Just imagine what that would mean! He was a monument, the pride of the Soviet rulers.

Who won several Soviet championships (Bronstein picks up the a-pawn and emphatically puts it down on a4) Who played successfully against the world elite in Nottingham in 1936! (The b-pawn is put on b4) Who won the tournament in Moscow in 1935! (The c-pawn goes to c4) Who came out victorious in Groningen in 1946! (The d-pawn lands on d4) Who sent a telegram to the great leader Stalin! (The e-pawn goes to e4) Who brought them the world championship in 1948! (The f-pawn is moved to f4) Who was a loyal supporter of the system! (The g-pawn is put on g4) Who received a car for his victory! (The h-pawn is put on the last vacant square on the fourth rank) And who was I? A simple boy from the country.'

So I ask him a direct question: Was it on purpose that he didn't win the last game? Absent-mindedly he dismisses the suggestion, 'No, no, it was just a bad variation.' Was it a subconscious block, then, that got the better of him? He looks up. 'For me it was not so important. I can tell you that the evening before, at ten to twelve, I visited my friend Vainstain, although now of course he says he doesn't remember. He said, David you are going to win. And I told him, it doesn't matter that much to me.'

I continue my own train of thought and observe that it looked as if he had enough protection not to have to be afraid of beating Botvinnik. After all he was a member of the KGB chess club Dynamo. 'That was not the problem, because I was liked. People liked me. I was popular. You see, the Dynamo club had all kinds of sports and only a small chess section. Normally, when you entered that club as a soldier you would leave as a captain, but I came in as a soldier and left as a soldier.' Then he admits there were other reasons why he didn't aspire to be World Champion. 'At that time I was considering a divorce. Yes, I was in love with another girl. But suppose I would win the title, then I would be famous and when you were famous a divorce was out of the question. And what else would happen to me if I was famous? My father had been in prison for seven years. I would be in the press and every time they would start about my father.'

Bronstein looks up and with wonderful frankness says: 'Yes, I believe that I was the strongest in the world.'

As we move to the kitchen, he says that before we eat or drink anything he wants a matter settled that has greatly upset him. In an interview in New In Chess in 1995 Viktor Kortchnoi talked about the campaign that Stalin started in 1952 against Soviet doctors, most of whom were Jews. He wanted to present them as the driving forces behind a huge Jewish conspiracy against Communism. Kortchnoi related that in order to support this campaign the Ministry of Internal Affairs drafted a public letter incriminating the doctors, which 'well-known Jewish people' were asked to sign. As far as Kortchnoi remembered, Botvinnik refused to sign, but Bronstein did. With growing anger and indignation Bronstein gives his side of the story: 'Kortchnoi says strange things. First he says that he heard rumours about a letter and almost immediately after that he states that he is sure that Botvinnik refused to sign this letter, but that Bronstein was in a difficult situation and signed it. Let me say that I never heard of this letter and according to me it never existed. I don't think that he has the right to stab me in the back after the things I have done for him. It's typical of Russian grandmasters who have gone to the West. They are so proud that they fled and we are the idiots who stayed behind. They all walk with their noses in the air. At that time Kortchnoi was just a young chicken. I want the readers of your magazine to know that this is all his fantasy. I'm writing this book where I have just finished a really nice chapter about Kortchnoi and I don't want to spoil the book by including this episode, but your readers should know. Where does he get the right to talk about me like that? A famous Jew. I wasn't, at least that was not how I saw myself. I considered myself a Soviet citizen.' He remains annoyed and gets up to fetch a book that deals with the period called *Stalin's War against the Jews* and subtitled 'The doctors' plot and the Soviet solution', published in 1990. He quickly finds the page he is looking for and insists that I read the passage he indicates. It says that it was Stalin's wish to have such a letter to make his campaign a success, but that there is no evidence at all that it ever materialized.

Once he has this off his chest, it's time for cheese, salmon and bread. And vodka, of which he only takes a tiny drop, as his doctor has forbidden him to drink. He relaxes and his face suddenly reminds me of the photos of the young Bronstein as he begins to tell stories. 'You know, some years ago I suddenly realized that actually it was a good thing that they didn't treat me with due respect at the closing dinner of my match with Botvinnik. I was seated at the bottom of the table, even the arbiters had more prominent seats. During dinner all important guests were asked to say a few words. Also Keres, who ended with a loudly proclaimed Long live the Communist Party and the Soviet Union! This was the bit that Botvinnik forgot. He only thanked certain people, and I think that this was the reason why he failed to get two of the major Soviet honours later. Fortunately they forgot to ask me to say something. I had never thought about this, but it was only a few years ago that it occurred to me that I was quite lucky not to be asked.'

Taking another tiny drop of vodka he begins to explain how he always tried to introduce certain possibilities in the position by upsetting the balance with a quirky move. But not at all cost: 'I would sacrifice a knight, but there would always be some emergency exit. A perpetual or I might give a pawn and reach a draw some way. But I might also win, and of course I lost sometimes. I remember sacrificing my queen against Smyslov. The moment I played it I knew that it was incorrect, but that day there were so many spectators and I wanted to offer them some fun.'

I wonder if this seemingly light-hearted attitude is not contrary to the legendary seriousness of his approach at the start of a game, when he would often think for 15 minutes or more on his first move? 'That was just to become quiet. When you came to the tournament hall there were always so many people who wanted to speak to you briefly. At the board I would take some time to switch to the game. Sometimes five minutes, sometimes ten, but also half an hour. But then I was thinking about what course the game might take. I'd be thinking about which variation he might play in which opening and whether I was in the mood for that. But once I made up my mind I played quite quickly, and pretty soon my opponents would catch up with me in time. I always wanted to have some creative position, in which there were... (looks at me, searching for the right word) like in the red light district..'

'Many opportunities?'

'Yes, many opportunities!' And laughing he holds out his hand, which I slap instinctively. It turns out to be the right reaction. 'That's what they do in Georgia. When someone says something you fully agree with you reach out your hand and after the other has slapped your hand you slap his.' Which, in the light mood that has descended on the table, we will now do at regular intervals.

He didn't want his play to be too serious. 'You know how Botvinnik would come to the board.' He takes on a severe and serious mien and does a wonderful impression. 'He'd sit down, make a move, write it down and then cross his arms in front of him and sit there like a statue. Alexander once told me that when he played him and Botvinnik sat there after he had made his first move, his first impulse was to simply resign.'

He repeats that he has always been in favour of quicker chess, where you have to follow your feeling, your instinct: 'That's what I've always had, an immediate understanding of any position I was confronted with. Kramnik said that he plays for nuances (pronounced with mocking dignity), which leads to very boring chess. You play a3 and pull a very serious face. If you play quickly you cannot exploit these minimal advantages and this results in far more exciting games. Botvinnik wrote an article about why Fischer beat Spassky. Because he played so quickly. Spassky was used to sitting down and relaxing after every move, but here, boom!, came Fischer's move and there was no time to relax.'

When, after lunch, we return to his study, his cheerful mood vanishes. He resents Kasparov, who allegedly said after he won the title that chess was now going to a new level and that chess before the war had been kindergarten chess. 'He forgets that they invented all the moves that these days still are being played.' And he picks up a pre-war magazine which contains a game of his. 'You see, here I played g4 against the Dragon. That was my idea. I already played it then.' Bronstein believes that his generation was more talented. He fetches a book about the 1955 USA-USSR match and shows an article that Euwe wrote about the players. About Bronstein he notes that his book about Zurich 1953, his match against Botvinnik and all the tournaments he has won so far would be more than enough for any man's life, but that there is still more to come. According to Euwe, Bronstein thinks ahead 15 moves where other grandmasters think ahead 5 moves and that therefore he plays 'superchess'.

Having closed the USSR-USA match book, he opens a Colombian chess magazine from the early fifties in which the editor writes at the end of one of his games: It is for this kind of game that many believe that Bronstein is the strongest player in the world. Bronstein looks up and with wonderful frankness says: 'Yes, I believe that I was the strongest in the world.'

When I am putting on my coat to leave he is still pensive. 'You know, I've always tried to carry the weight of keeping chess creative on my shoulders, like Atlas carried the heavens. But what has it brought me? I was always willing to play anywhere and to entertain people with the creative joy of chess. I was the best player, but I also played the Moscow championship, which few strong grandmasters deigned to attend. I trained Chiburdanidze for two months, I gave simuls and exhibitions. I wrote books, also for beginners, which is something few top players do. And now this country has changed and robbed me of a decent pension. In Soviet times a player like me would have a pension that was five times that of a doctor. The first thing Putin did, his first decree, was to make sure that Yeltsin and his family could not be prosecuted for anything they had done. Now what country is this? Chess is an intellectual trap. The career span of most players now is ten years. In these ten years you can finish two studies and be a doctor or whatever. Instead they think quite something of themselves as you see them sitting there. And why? Because they push a pawn from e2 to e4.'

'That's what I've always had, an immediate understanding of any position I was confronted with.'

On the day that I am to fly back to Amsterdam I return for a last brief visit. This time he has put on a suit and tie. He wasn't too happy with the sweater he was wearing when I took some pictures yesterday. Still, he isn't overly eager when I shoot some new photos in this more appropriate attire. He says that he doesn't like to see himself in photographs, but he confesses that he has always been proud of his eyes. And so I also try to take some photos of his eyes, which are not really a success as my camera is low on batteries. We get up and inevitably end up in front of his books again. I tell him that just like chess, books are also a trap. You keep buying them in the hope that they will automatically prolong your life, as you are sure that one day you will read them all. A broad smile crosses his face and silently he extends his upturned hand to be slapped once again.

He wants to give another justification for his tireless efforts to keep the creativity in chess alive. From a row of bigger books that are mainly on art, he takes H.J.R. Murray's monumental *History of Chess* and turns to the final chapter on the most recent developments that the English historian described in his magnum opus of 1913. There it is and he reads it out aloud: 'The Modern School is the direct result of the modern Tournament system, which penalizes a player heavily for the loss of a game. When the result of each round depends upon a single game, the player naturally declines to risk anything by a direct attack when the failure of the attack will leave him with a compromised position. The Modern School is essentially safety play.' Bronstein is satisfied: 'You see, he already noticed this then.'

Having put the book back he rummages in a drawer of the cupboard and takes out a portrait of Pushkin. There are many more of the same portraits underneath it. He asks me if I want to have one. He found them in Minsk, they only cost two kopeks a piece. First he bought one, but when he went back the next day and saw that none of the others had been sold he bought twenty more. 'I couldn't stand the idea that no one was interested in our greatest poet.'

As our conversation once again drifts back to the old days, he suddenly takes a decision and says almost belligerently: 'You know what? Shall I show you this famous 23rd game?' I am stunned, but obviously I agree and he starts looking for a book that has the score of the ill-fated game that has kept haunting him all his life. 'First I have to find the moves somewhere. Of course I don't know them by heart. I haven't looked at this game for ages.' We sit down at his chess board and with the book that he has found in his hands he begins to execute the cautious opening moves with which Botvinnik wanted to fight for a win in his last white game. Bronstein looks at the unassuming white set-up and wonders sarcastically: 'Is this the way to play for a win by a World Champion?' I refrain from mentioning Kasparov's approach in the last game of his match against Karpov in Seville and quietly watch Bronstein playing through the game. Indeed there is little to enjoy, and I nod understandingly when he says that he got bored with the position and that this boredom made him careless. That's why he failed to play 23...♘f5, which as Botvinnik later pointed out would have still given Black enough play for a draw. Black's position gradually becomes critical and after Botvinnik's powerful 44.♗g3! he is lost. Before he plays the game through till the end, Bronstein cannot stop himself: 'And so this one move makes all the difference. One move gives people the right to look at you as a completely different person.' When we get up to go to the kitchen for a last bite and a last drop of vodka, he makes his point once again: 'Just because you didn't become World Champion everything you've ever done is put in a completely different perspective. There are many strong grandmasters, but apparently none of them can compare to these great champions.'

He knows that I am about to leave and doesn't like the prospect that soon I will be writing about our talks. He doesn't want to be portrayed as a complaining old person. Why should he complain? 'I was born in 1924. I didn't have to go into the war because of bad eyesight, but they say that of my generation between two and five million perished. My own estimate is closer to ten million.'

'Did you have the feeling that you were also living for those who died?'

'Yes, I've always felt that very strongly.'

He doesn't want to begin about it himself, so I pour us another tiny drop of vodka and tell him bluntly: 'David, it doesn't matter what I am going to write about you. You will not like it anyway. As you've never liked most of what has been written about you. Because no one could possibly present a complete picture of what you think or who you are. Of course, in a way you are right, but still I feel that this should not stop me from writing about you.'

When I put on my coat he dons his fur hat and accompanies me down the stairs to the front door of his apartment building. Casting a last disapproving look at my uncovered head he kisses me three times on the cheek. We've no idea when and if we will meet again. But I hope it will be soon that he starts telling me about all the things that I never should have written.

It was a moment I shall never forget. November 2001, New York City. I was there on business, just six weeks after 9/11. Having arrived on a Sunday, it was now Tuesday evening, and I had just returned from a shocking visit to the ruins of Ground Zero. Having a couple of spare minutes to catch up on the chess news, I looked on the main English site, and was greeted with a headline, which read simply: 'Tony Miles, 1955-2001'. England's first OTB grandmaster, and one of my first chess heroes, had died in his sleep, aged just 46. Miles was a unique character, as well as a fine player, and his loss was a desperate shock for the whole chess world. Jan Timman was a near-contemporary, who had played Miles innumerable times, and in New In Chess 2002/1, he paid his own tribute.

'Afraid of the Caro-Kann?'

Jan Timman

An old Jewish belief has it that it is only the purest of spirit that are granted the privilege of dying in their sleep. This happened to Tony Miles in the first half of November last year. In the summer of 2000 I had met him for the last time at the European championship in Saint Vincent, not far from the ancient Roman army town of Aosta – called after the Emperor August – at the foot of the Matterhorn.

One night we visited the night bar 'Moses', where we talked for hours. I was struck by the clarity of his insight into chess, despite the fact that he was no longer able to play at top level.

He was also quite reticent about himself. It felt as if he had encased his private life in armour. But he talked light-heartedly and humorously about the shenanigans the big shots in the chess world got up to. This is how I knew him from his pieces for 'The Chess Café', which were written in a very individual and direct literary style. Last year, when Yasser Seirawan and David Levy were airing their grievances in open letters to FIDE and Raymond Keene, respectively, Miles wrote an open letter as well. He started it with the brilliant salutation 'Dear me', because, as he explained himself, he couldn't think of anyone else to address it to – a brand-new stylistic device.

Miles had a go at Seirawan's jeremiad against FIDE, in which he made the point that neither he nor any other chess player should be stopped from going to countries like Iran. With admirable clarity he lay down the professional chess player's creed: international politics was incomprehensible and riddled with opportunism. No chess player ought to allow himself or herself to be guided by it. The professional chess player is a citizen of the world who needs to be able to adapt, that was the gist of it.

His reaction to Levy's letter, which can be found in New In Chess 2000/3, was dripping with acerbic humour. Although Miles himself had been feuding with Keene for years, nothing indicated that he bore him a grudge. It felt rather as if he was keeping an amused eye on all the intrigues from a distance. When a grandmaster is no longer able to earn enough by playing, it is only natural that he starts concentrating on other aspects of the profession. Miles has had two successful careers in both fields, although it must be said that his untimely death put too sudden a stop to his literary chess career.

It is hard to express the shock I felt when I saw his photograph, accompanied by a brief obituary, in a Dutch morning paper. How could it be that he, four years younger than my 1951 generation, was the first of the post-war warriors to bite the dust in the fight for survival?

1977 was the year in which he broke through to the world top, finishing sole second at the first Interpolis, one point behind Karpov, just one point ahead of me and some others. Nine years he maintained his position in the world top. After that the hard life of Western top players started taking its toll: his concentration suffered and his chess plummeted.

Tony Miles (glass of milk in hand!) playing Jan Timman at the 1978 Zonal Tournament in Amsterdam.

Miles had the habit of sticking in some witticisms at the start of a game. In 1979 I played him in Bled/Portoroz. As White he went for the variation of the English opening with which I had lost against Karpov in the great tournament of Montreal. This event was convincingly won by Karpov and Tal, and the two World Champions had prepared for it together. Miles went about it in a slightly different way, but I soon managed to equalize with a tactical finesse. After this finesse of mine he thought for a long time before playing a move that would inevitably lead to a draw. After accepting the inevitable he asked: 'Karpov, Tal or Timman?' I did not tell him, of course. I had found it myself, but Tal and Karpov must surely have known about it as well.

Five years later we played in Bugojno, shortly after he had changed his opening repertoire. He had repudiated the Dragon, because the theory of this set-up had swollen to terrifying proportions. Against Misha Tal, earlier in the tournament, he had played the Caro-Kann. Miles's lack of experience allowed Tal to build up a superior position, only to blunder in time-trouble and succumbing to Black's counter-attack. The following morning I privately told Miles at breakfast: 'You got away with that crummy opening again.' He made no answer, but later in the tournament, when I opened 1.d4 against him, he asked: 'Afraid of the Caro-Kann?' Now it was my turn to keep my own counsel.

A year later we met in Linares, where we had to play in an unheated sports hall for a change. I had complained bitterly to Miles about this, saying that there were more pleasant ways of spending an evening. In our encounter, a sharp Queen's Indian went horribly wrong for me. But then he made a mistake, leaving me with a good position. 'I offer you a relaxed evening,' he said by way of a draw offer. I politely but resolutely declined and went on to win the game.

That same year we played the double-rounder in Tilburg, about which he wrote such a magnificent report in New In Chess. In the previous issue, Sosonko wrote extensively about the developments in this tournament, which Miles largely played from a massage table. I only want to say one little thing about it. After our second game, which he won in style with a flank opening as White, he asked me during the post-mortem: 'May I ask you: were you disturbed by my unusual position during the game?' To which I replied tersely: 'No, I had enough problems with my own position.'

But there were also times when he avoided such verbal contact before, during or after the game, as in Tilburg 1986 against Karpov. Miles, as Black, had solved all his opening problems and the position was equal. Karpov kept trying to win, though. After a while it looked as if the same position would crop up for the third time and that Karpov would be able to claim a draw by repetition. But Miles knew very well that in the first position he still had the right to castle, and he also knew that Karpov wasn't aware of this. The former World Champion took his time to decide whether or not to keep trying to win. Realizing that there was no point, he tried to beckon Miles. But Miles had turned his back and was scrupulously avoiding eye-contact. He was hoping that Karpov would call on the arbiter, knowing full well that wrongly claiming a draw would cost the player in question five minutes of playing time. When Karpov finally got around to calling in the arbiter, he was lucky to have about eight minutes on his clock, so that he had enough time left to make a draw. Because it goes without saying that Miles the street fighter coolly played on after the unjustified claim.

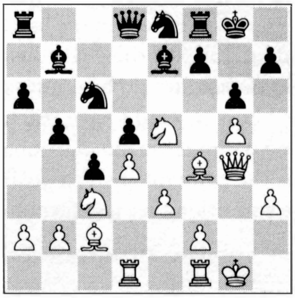
At school I learned that war is always brought about by underlying causes, but that there is also invariably something that sparks it off. In our case it could be said that what sparked off Miles's demise as a top player was his drubbing at the hands of Kasparov in 1986, whereas the underlying cause certainly was the emergence of Short. They got on reasonably well at the start, but after a while their relationship deteriorated, especially after the publication of Lawson's *The Inner Game*. Tony took his revenge in a magnificent game analysis that was published in this magazine (New In Chess 1998/6).

Not only did he provide a crystal-clear explanation of the technical rook ending that he won in such virtuoso style, he also became the first player to give his then rival the nickname he had had for years: Gump. This nickname had been thought up in English chess circles, after the then challenger, backed up by lies and other excuses, decided to play his match against Kasparov outside of FIDE. In the film *Forrest Gump*, the main protagonist also gets up to all kinds of stupidities without ending up the worst for them. When Tony feuded with someone, he did his fighting honestly and openly, which is an admirable trait: it is a great pity that we can no longer enjoy his verbal fisticuffs.

One of his most beautiful games was his 1978 encounter with Spassky.

QI 2.4
Tony Miles
Boris Spassky
Montilla Moriles 1978 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 b6 3.c4 e6 4.♗f4 Miles had a patent on this system against the Queen's Indian. **4...♗b7 5.e3 ♗e7** Spassky goes for a passive set-up, allowing White to get a clear opening advantage. **6.h3** Otherwise Black might get the bishop pair. **6...0-0 7.♘c3 d5 8.cxd5 exd5** It was probably better to swap a couple of knights, but even then Black would feel the pressure. **9.♗d3 c5 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘e5 c4 12.♗c2 a6 13. g4** The signal for the attack. **13...b5 14.g5 ♘e8 15.♕g4 g6 16.♖ad1**



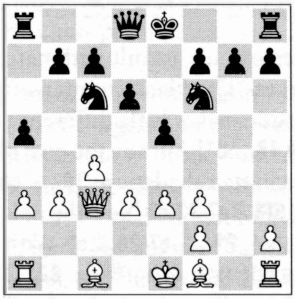
White prepares his assault with natural developing moves. The black counter-offensive on the queenside makes little difference. **16...♘g7 17.h4 ♗b4 18.♘d7!** Already the final blow. But it needed accurate calculation. **18...♗c8 19.♘xd5 ♔h8 20.♘5f6 ♖a7 21.d5** Now the point of move 16 is revealed. **21...♘e7 22.♗e5** With the point that 22...♗xd7 fails to 23.♕d4. **22...♖xd7 23.h5** The attack is rolling along – but it still requires accurate calculation. **23...♖xd5 24.♕f4!** The best square for the queen. **24...♖xd1 25.♖xd1 ♕a5 26.♘e8!** The death blow. **26...f6 27.gxf6 ♔g8 28.♘xg7** And Black resigned, crushed.

A magnificent attacking win, all the more considering that Spassky, together with Karpov, had won the first Bugojno tournament earlier that year.

The first time Miles and I met was at his Hastings debut in 1973/74. Incidentally, I also made my international debut in Hastings, four years earlier. Since then we played many interesting games, of which the following was arguably the most exciting one.

EO 5.4
Tony Miles
Jan Timman
Las Palmas 1977 (8)

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.e3 At the time a more common continuation than 4.g3. **4...♗b4 5.♕c2 d6** The usual move is 5...0-0. The idea of the text is to meet 6.♘d5 with 6...♗c5. **6.a3 ♗xc3 7.♕xc3 a5 8.b3** An important alternative is 8.d4, to get the best possible grip on the centre immediately. The text enables Black to execute a strategic plan leading to quite a satisfactory position. **8...♗g4 9.d3** Miles is alert. After the obvious 9.♗b2, Black would get great control of the position with 9...♘e4! 10.♕c2 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♘g5 12.♗e2 ♘e6. In the battle between bishop and knight pair the slight disruption of White's pawn chain would be unpleasant, as the black king's knight would have reached the vital square e6 without too much trouble. **9...♗xf3** Black joins the principled strategic battle after all, but the conditions are less favourable now. **10.gxf3**



10...d5?!

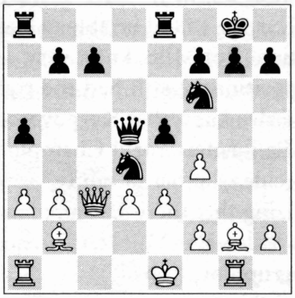
But this was over-optimistic, as the rest of the game will show. Castling kingside was called for.

11.cxd5 ♕xd5 12.♖g1!

Very sharp. White needn't bother to cover the f-pawn and consistently works towards opening the position.

12...0-0 13.♗b2!

Again to the point. After the obvious breaking move 13.f4 Black had the standard piece sacrifice 13...♘d4!. Accepting it would give Black a dangerous attack, while 14.♗g2 would fail to 14...♕xb3. **13...♖fe8 14.f4 ♘d4 15.♗g2**

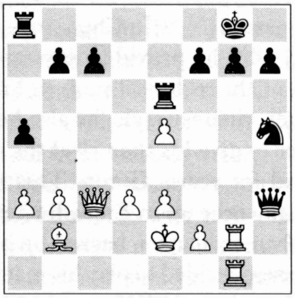


Now the difference is clear. Because the white queen is covered, Black has to swap his dominant knight against the freshly developed white king's bishop, after which White starts exerting dangerous pressure on g7.

15...♘f3+ 16.♗xf3 ♕xf3 17.♖g3 An important intermediate move. After 17.fxe5 ♘g4 Black would take control. **17...♕h1+ 18.♔e2 ♕xh2 19.♖ag1** White aims all his forces against g7. Black seems to be in great trouble, but a lucky coincidence allows him to throw up a hasty defence. **19...♘h5 20.♖3g2 ♕h3 21.fxe5 ♖e6**

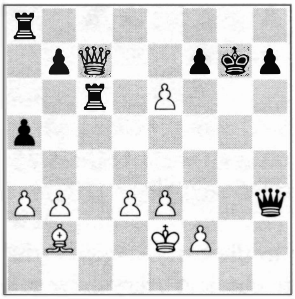
With great effort Black has managed to block the combined power of the doubled rooks and the battery on the long diagonal.

The quiet 22.♕d4 would have given White by far the better position. But Miles gives in to the temptation of an attractive and magnificent combination – but it is one that just falls short of winning.



22.♕xc7 ♖c6 23.♖xg7+! The point of the previous move. White is going to make a double rook sacrifice in order to open the long diagonal with tempo and then try to drive the unprotected black king into a mating net. It was now or never for White's idea, for after 23.♕xb7 ♖c2+ 24.♔d1 ♖ac8 the attack would revert to Black, e.g. 25.e6 ♕xe6 26.♖xg7+ ♘xg7 27.♖xg7+ ♔f8, and now 28.♖xh7 fails to 28...♕g4+.

23...♘xg7 24.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 25.e6+



25...♔h6!

The only square for the king.

26.♕f4+ ♔h5 27.♕xf7+ ♔g4

Incredible but true. This unlikely square is, relatively speaking, the safest spot for the black king, the point being that after 28.f3+ ♔g3 29.♗e5+ ♔g2 it will find a safe hiding place on h1.

28.♕g7+ ♔f5 29.♕e5+ ♔g6 30.♕g7+ ♔f5 31.♕f6+ ♔g4 32.♕f4+

And drawn at White's request.

Miles had invested a lot of time in calculating the consequences of 32.♗e5, eventually discovering that Black then has 32...♖c2+ 33.♔d1 ♖xf2! 34.♕xf2 ♕f3+ 35.♕xf3+ ♔xf3, liquidating to an endgame in which the white pawn front is of no consequence and Black would be winning because of his passed h-pawn.

In the late 1990s, New In Chess began to include an in-depth book review column, which was initially entrusted to English GM Matthew Sadler. Matthew had just retired from professional chess, and taken a job in Amsterdam. His chatty writing style, with its abundance of exclamation marks, was not everybody's cup of tea, but his insights into so many of the processes of playing chess made every article highly instructive. Having retired from professional play, he was also able to offer a fairly unique combination of insights, both those of a world-class GM (he was rated 15th in the world at his peak) and an amateur, who now only played the occasional league game on a weekend.

Mission impossible?

Matthew Sadler

It had already been a bad day at the office when the e-mail came in. As I started to read it, for some reason the theme tune of 'Mission Impossible' began to sound in my head. It was a message from the editor, couched in his normal slightly apologetic manner: 'Matthew, great, loved the last article, but could it just be a *teeny* bit shorter? It's just that...well, there are other things in the chess world beside books – you know, tournaments and stuff – so we do want to keep a bit of space in the magazine for these as well...'

Gulp. Not an easy task for me to be short and to the point. Almost as painful as asking me to use fewer exclamation marks. But well, I promised to do my best, so brace yourselves for the new-style punchy ‘Sadler on Books’ review!

So, having only wasted a couple of paragraphs, we launch into this issue’s review: *Understanding the Leningrad Dutch* by Valeri Beim (Gambit). Having enjoyed Beim’s previous book for Gambit, I had high hopes for this one and I was not disappointed. The author takes a less encyclopaedic approach to the opening than is normal for Gambit books. It is a nice mix of theory and general advice. Reading through it, you feel as if you have the privilege of being taught an opening by a strong player. There are gaps and not everything is covered, but the general stuff that you learn more than compensates for the stuff you miss. In particular, I really like Beim’s idea of choosing 35 typical Dutch positions and setting them as exercises at the end of the book. Most importantly, the positions are well chosen and extremely instructive.

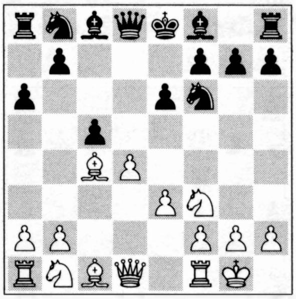
I decided to make the ultimate test: I would play the opening myself!

I was so impressed with the book that I decided to make the ultimate test of an opening book: I would play the opening myself! However, first of all I had to get over a slight problem: I hated my position with Black!

Thinking about it, I came to realize where my problem lay – I was looking at my position too much! And what did I see? That x-rayed e6-square. Every thought was tinged with the regret of having played ...f5. I couldn’t shake off the depressing thought that even if I stood better, I’d still be worse because of the e6-square! This type of thinking is not conducive to a positive frame of mind!

I call this phenomenon ‘thinking overhead’. In the case of the Dutch, that means the extra amount of thought that you have to put in on every move because of the risky positional decision you take on move one. Every time you make a normal developing move, apart from the normal planning and calculation, you also have to check to make sure that White cannot use your weakness to establish a bind. Thinking about it some more, it suddenly struck me that this concept also applies to my beloved Queen’s Gambit Accepted.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 a6 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♗xc4 e6 6.0-0 c5

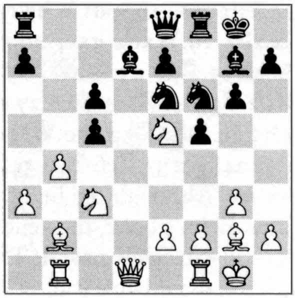


Certainly in the early stages of the opening, you have to check at every move to make sure that White cannot play dxc5 to force a favourable version of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted ending. While much less dramatic than the ‘thinking overhead’ in the Dutch, if you skip this thinking, you have very high chances of ending up in a prospectless position.

Having rationalized it in this way, I felt ready to try out the Leningrad Dutch. I was prepared and I could accept that every decision I made would be racked with worry about my e6-square, but I would live for the moment when my weakness would disappear!

On top of the German Bundesliga, I also play the occasional match for Amersfoort in the second league of the Dutch team championships. The evening before a match, I always take part in an analysis session. We all get together, one of us demonstrates a game and we all try to sacrifice pieces! One particular evening, a club member demonstrated one of his novelties in one of the main lines of the Dutch Leningrad:

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.♘c3 ♕e8 8.d5 ♘a6 9.♖b1 ♗d7 10.b4 c6 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.a3 ♘c7 13.♗b2 ♘e6 14.c5 dxc5 15.♘e5



and now instead of the normal 15...♖d8, when Beim gives the game Van der Sterren-Onischuk, German Bundesliga 1999/2000, which continued 16.♕b3 ♔h8 17.bxc5 ♘xc5 18.♕c4 ♘b7 19.♕a6 ♘d6 20.♕xa7 ♘f7 21.♘xd7 ♖xd7 22.♕c5 ♖d6 23.♖fd1 ♘d7 24.♕a7 ♘fe5 25.♗a1 ♕a8 26.♕xa8 ♖xa8 27.♘b5 ♖xd1+ 28.♖xd1 ♖a5 29.♘c7 ♗f6 30.♘e6 ♔g8 31.f4 ♘g4 32.♖xd7 ♗xa1 33.♗xc6 with a much better position for White, he wanted to play **15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♖b8** We analysed it for a while, became dissatisfied, switched temporarily to 15...♖c8, discovered that 16.♕b3 ♔h8 17.♘xd7 ♕xd7 18.♖fd1 is rather scary for Black (no c8-square for the black queen) before settling on 15...♖b8!? as an interesting alternative.

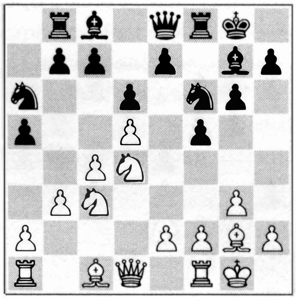
Obviously, it still looks completely revolting, but that still wasn't enough to shake my faith in the Dutch! I *would* play it the next day if possible... but maybe a different main line!

HD 6.12
Otto Rubingh
Matthew Sadler
Dutch league 2002/03 (3)

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.♘c3 ♕e8 8.d5 a5

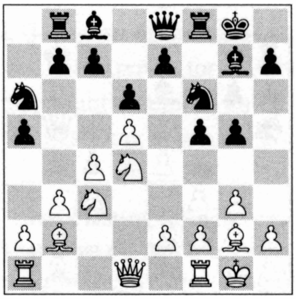
I analysed this line while seconding Jeroen Piket in the Dutch championships. Not one of the most successful partnerships in history, I'm afraid, but we did look at a lot of interesting stuff together. Jeroen had to play with white against Predrag Nikolic who at the time specialized in a number of offbeat Dutch variations so I spent a lot of time on these. The nice point about this line in comparison to the main line we saw is that White cannot expand very easily on the queenside with b4. However, there is a cost in terms of development and also in terms of the weakening of the queenside. For example, if Black ever wants to nibble at the white centre with ...c6, then he must always watch out for the manoeuvre ♘c3-a4-b6 exploiting the fact that ...a5 has weakened the b6-square.

9.♘d4 ♘a6 10.b3 ♖b8



Slightly worryingly, my opponent seemed to know what he was doing. At least, he was playing very quickly. He told me after the game that he played the Leningrad Dutch with black. I was quite pleased with the thinking behind 10...♖b8. First of all, I was able to repress my urge to lash out due to the weakness on e6. 'It's only a square,' I told myself. Secondly, I noticed that after a future ♗b2, White would no longer have control over the g5-square. This gives Black an ideal opportunity to expand the kingside with ...g5 without first spending a tempo on ...h6. However, while waiting for White to play ♗b2, Black has to find something useful to do. I did wonder about the normal move 10...♗d7, but I was wary of playing for ...c6 because of the ♘a4-b6 manoeuvre, and I also wanted to have b7 covered in case White ever wanted to play ♘e6.

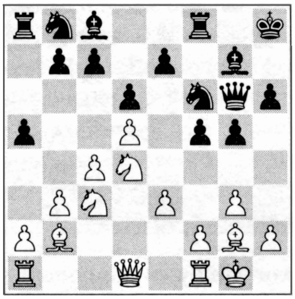
11.♗b2 g5!?



Here we go! There were a number of things about which I was very uncertain. What if White plays something like 12.e3 ♕g6 13.f4.

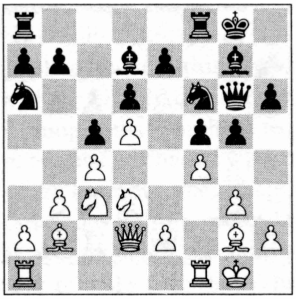
Is this really okay for Black? I was not sure, but at least Beim's book did give me a number of points of reference. First of all, position 28 from the exercises at the end of the book:

Alexey Shirov- Yury Piskov, Moscow 1991: 1.♘f3 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 d6 4.d4 g6 5.0-0 ♗g7 6.b3 0-0 7.♗b2 ♕e8 8.c4 h6 9.♘c3 g5 10.e3 ♔h8 11.d5 a5 12.♘d4 ♕g6



Looks kind of familiar doesn't it? Shirov now massacred his opponent with: 13.f4 ♘g4 14.♕d2 ♕h5 15.h3 ♘f6 16.e4 fxe4 17.g4 ♗xg4 18.fxg5 ♗xh3 19.♘e6 e3 20.♕xe3 ♗xe6 21.gxf6 ♗xf6 22.♘e4 ♗xb2 23.♖xf8+ ♗g8 24.♖af1 ♗g7 25.♘g3 ♕g4 26.♖1f4 ♕g5 27.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 28.♕e6+ 1-0.

However, Beim writes that 'White cannot usually weaken his pawn chain in this way without punishment. Here Black is still developing and cannot capitalize on his weakness.' Another point of course, is that Black played absolutely miserably: moves 13 to 15 contributed nothing to Black's position. Anyway, in my game, I'm much better developed so I guessed that I shouldn't have as many problems as Piskov! I also thought back to position 32 from Tukmakov-Malaniuk, Lvov 1990:



14...♘g4 15.♘f2 ♗d4 16.♘d1 ♕h5 17.h3 ♘xf2 18.♘xf2 ♗xb2 19.♕xb2 gxf4 20.gxf4 ♔h7 21.e4 ♖g8 22.e5 ♖g7 23.♔h1 ♖ag8 24.♖g1 ♕h4 25.♕d2 ♖g3 26.♖ae1 ♗e8 27.exd6 exd6 28.♔h2 ♗h5 29.♘h1 ♖3g7 30.♕f2 ♕xf2 31.♘xf2 ♘b4 32.a4 ♘c2 33.♖e6 ♘d4 34.♖xd6 0-1.

So there we are. Although the line I was playing was not in Beim's book, the general advice he gave was still extremely useful. That's what an opening book should give you!

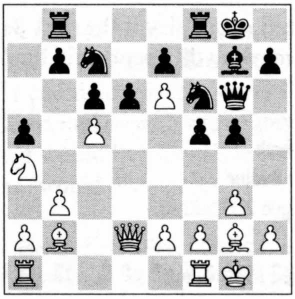
12.♘e6?!

Yes!! Victory!! No more worrying about the e6-square! Now that a pawn is on e6, I no longer have to worry about the damage that a piece – specifically a knight – could do from that square. Also, I don't have to worry about White playing e4, opening up the e-file and piling up on my backward pawn on e7: the pawn on e6 covers my e-pawn for me. There goes my 'thinking overhead'! Now already I can start thinking normally!

12...♗xe6 13.dxe6 c6

The only benefit for White of 12.♘e6 is that he gains the d5-square for his knight and that he opens up the long diagonal for his light-squared bishop. With 13...c6, Black nullifies these benefits. I think that Black is now on the verge of a clear advantage.

14.♕d2 ♕g6 15.♘a4 ♘c7 16.c5?!



White has a specific idea in mind, but this only make things worse. Now Black gets unshakable control of the centre.

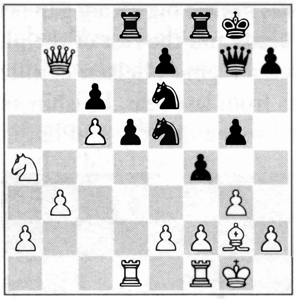
16...d5 17.♕xa5

17.♗e5 ♘e4.

17...♘xe6 18.♗e5 ♖bd8 19.♕b4 ♘g4! 20.♗xg7 ♕xg7 21.♖ad1

21.♕xb7 ♘d4 22.♖ae1 (22.e3 ♘e2+ 23.♔h1 ♘xf2+) 22...f4 is very powerful.

21...♘e5 22.♕xb7 f4!



22...♖b8 23.♕a6 ♖a8 24.♕b6 ♖fb8 25.♗xd5! would make things unnecessarily complicated. After the text move, just watch the attack go! **23.♕b4 g4 24.♕c3** 24.♖fe1 ♘g5 followed by ...f3 is also very powerful. **24...f3 25.exf3 gxf3 26.♖fe1 d4 27.♕c2 fxg2 28.♔xg2 d3 29.♕b2 ♘f4+ 30.♔h1 ♕g4 31.gxf4 ♕f3+ 32.♔g1 ♖xf4 33.♕xe5 ♕xf2+** And White resigned.

So am I now a fully-fledged Leningrad Dutch freak? Hmm, not quite. Maybe it's something to do with my Catholic upbringing, but winning with the Dutch gave me the shameful feeling of having escaped my just punishment! I guess the Leningrad Dutch is only for sinners! But I can't deny it – that attack felt *good!*

In summary therefore, an excellent book! Recommended!

To any English chess player, Christmas means Hastings. The traditional seaside event started in 1895, and is still going today. Sadly, lack of commercial sponsorship and other problems have seen the quality of the event decline in recent years, but a dedicated band of volunteers have somehow kept the flag flying. The 2003/04 event was won by young Scottish GM Jonathan Rowson, and resulted in the first of what were to become his regular contributions to New In Chess. Sadly, money problems meant that it was also the last time Hastings was able to run a separate, all-play-all Premier.

Who's complaining about Hastings?

Jonathan Rowson

A couple of months before a wondrous drawing of lots marked the start of the 2003/04 Hastings Premier, Jonathan Rowson expressed his eagerness to write this year's report for us. The Scottish grandmaster was going to make his Hastings debut and did not doubt that there would be a story to tell. Now we wonder, did he also have a hunch that he was going to win the event?

Brits like to complain, which is why the toast they are served is given plenty of time to go cold before they are ready to eat it. It's also why they keep coming back to places where the sun is shy, the rain persists, and the wind whistles out of tune. Hastings also has a ridiculously steep hill that most players love to hate to climb in order to get to the playing venue. When they finally arrive, they are met by some Kafkaesque stairs that must also be climbed to reach the cafeteria, where they enjoy an anxious wait in a short queue, before sitting down to have a damn good moan about the whole thing.

Needless to say, this was my first time in Hastings, but in spite, or perhaps because of the above, I really rather enjoyed it. It's actually a charming place, with a lively centre, cheap food and, jokes aside, a useful train service to London. The paucity of heavy industry makes the air fresh and clean and when you finally make it to the top of that monstrous hill, the released endorphins give you lots of happy energy for the game you are about to play.

Back row (l. to r.): Stuart Conquest, Jonathan Rowson, Peter Heine Nielsen, Vladimir Epishin. Front row: Stewart Reuben, Kateryna Lahno, Mark Hebden, Danny Gormally and Vasilios Kotronias.

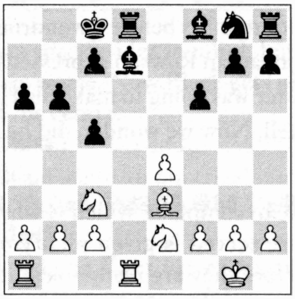
However, on the eve of the event, I feared the worst for the days to follow. After a painful introduction to the hill and getting completely bedraggled by the rain, I was rather bemused by Stewart Reuben's bizarre idea for the drawing of lots to determine the order of the pairings. Each player was called out in turn and had to play a move on an edible chocolate chess board, checking if the piece he moves has a number underneath it. If it does, that's his number; if not, he keeps playing moves for both sides until he finds a piece with a number. I was the last player to be called and had time to muse over troubling thoughts like what would happen if a player were to castle and have the choice of two numbers, or exchange off a piece with a number that had not yet been selected?

Fortunately no such scenario transpired, but I did have to play about four moves before being politely instructed to move a knight on c3 so that I could check underneath the white c-pawn on the following move. Moreover, when this amusing contrivance finally came to an end we were invited to eat the pieces (and not to worry about the hands that have just been all over them)!

There was quite a big rating gap between the top three seeds and the rest of the players. Although Peter Heine Nielsen couldn't repeat his success from last year, Epishin and Kotronias moved to +2 quickly and both looked to be especially dangerous opponents. I had quite a careful start, but moved up a gear with a vintage Exchange Lopez on the last day of the year.

RL 8.15
Jonathan Rowson
Daniel Gormally
Hastings 2003/04 (4)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 f6 6.d4 exd4 7.♘xd4 c5 8.♘e2 ♕xd1 9.♖xd1 ♗d7 10.♘bc3 0-0-0 11.♗e3 b6



Sometimes it can help to be unfamiliar with a line. This move has been ventured by Korneev and Adams but I knew only of 11...♖e8 followed by ...b6 so I started to look for the difference.

12.a4!?

A challenging move. After 11...♖e8 a4 has little point, and White tends to play 12.♖d2 but I noticed that after 12...♖e8 13.a5 ♔b7 Black's bishop on d7 is hanging. This means that Black has to be willing to play 13...b5!?, after which I suspect he is OK but he needs to be ready for something like 14.♘f4 (intending ♘d3-c5) 14...c4 15.b3!? when the position looks rather messy and perhaps quite dangerous for Black in view of White's lead in development.

12...a5?!

I was pleased to see this move which makes Black's pawns rather rigid. This turned out to be crucial in the bishop ending that followed.

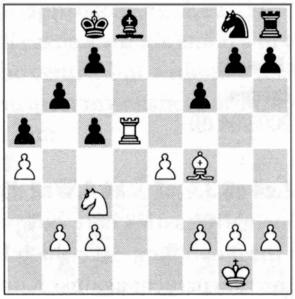
13.♖d2 ♗d6 14.♖ad1 ♗c6!?

14...♘e7 15.♗f4 ♗xf4 16.♘xf4 ♘g6 17.♘h5 ♖hg8 leaves White clearly better.

15.♗f4 ♗e7 16.♘d5 ♗xd5 17.♖xd5

17.exd5?! ♗d6 18.♗xd6 ♖xd6 (18...cxd6 19.♘f4) 19.♘c3 ♘h6 20.♘b5 ♖d7 21.d6 c6 and Black is fine.

17...♖xd5 18.♖xd5 ♗d8 19.♘c3?!



This is an 'echo' move (see my book *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*, Chapter 7). Given that Black can play c6 fairly easily, the knight does little here. However, part of me hadn't caught up with the fact that a pair of rooks and minor pieces had been exchanged and still thought that I should be trying to attack his king. Now, however, the key is to organize my pieces and advance on the kingside. Hence 19.f3!

19...♘e7 20.♖d2?!

Better was 20.♖d1.

20...♘g6 21.♗g3 h5!

With a bit of help from me, Danny has brought the position back from clearly worse to slightly worse and now I have a difficult decision to make.

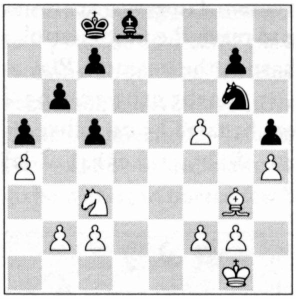
22.h4

I didn't want to fix a pawn on a dark square, but after 22.h3 h4 23.♗h2 c6!, 24.♖d6 is not dangerous and my pawns are rather stifled.

22...♖f8!?

At first I thought this was very strong, but now it looks like Danny was too impatient to equalize immediately. After 22...c6!? 23.f3 ♗c7 24.♔f2 Black's drawing chances are probably higher than White's winning chances.

23.♖d5 f5 24.♖xf5 ♖xf5 25.exf5



25...♘e7

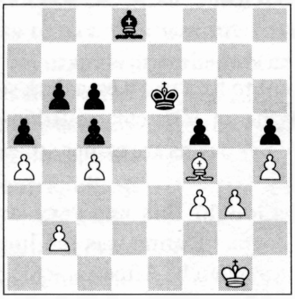
25...♘xh4 26.♗xh4 ♗xh4 27.♘e4 c4! 28.c3 (28.♘d2 c3! 29.bxc3 b5! 30.axb5 ♗f6 probably causes enough trouble to draw) 28...♔d7 29.♘d2 ♔d6 30.♘xc4+ ♔d5 and Black is probably better due to the relative activity of the kings. However, I have 27.b3!!, which I found after analysing the game with John Shaw and Colin McNab. White wants to play ♘e4 and c4 to keep the black king at bay and then gradually advance the kingside pawns but this is the only way to ensure that Black doesn't get serious counterplay.

26.f6! gxf6 27.♘e2 ♘g6?!

27...♘f5 28.♘f4 ♘g7 looks very passive but probably gives Black better chances to hold.

28.♘f4! ♘xf4 29.♗xf4 ♔d7 30.f3 ♔e6

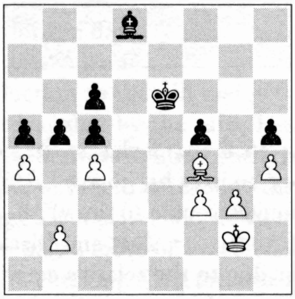
Obviously Black would like to play c4 if possible, if only to prevent my position from becoming dangerously pretty. However, 30...c4 31.g4 ♔e6 32.gxh5 c6 33.h6 ♔f7 34.♔f2 b5 35.♔e3 ♗b6+ 36.♔e4 and even though Black can threaten mate, White is winning due to the activity of his king: 36...♔e6 (36...♔g6 37.h5+!) 37.♗e3! **31.c4! f5 32.g3 c6**



33.♔g2?!

33.b3!? might have been more precise because it probably prevents b5 and thus makes the technical task easier. However, at this stage I was just trying to reach the time control, and didn't want to sharpen the position. Play might continue 33...b5 34.axb5 cxb5 35.cxb5 ♔d5 36.g4 fxg4 37.fxg4 hxg4 38.h5 c4 39.bxc4+ ♔xc4 40.h6 ♔d5 (40...♔xb5 41.♗e5) 41.♗d2! winning.

33...b5



34.b3!

I was tempted to take, because I thought it might be difficult to win the ending without the b6 pawn being weak, but I am glad I decided to play it safe. E.g. 34.axb5 cxb5 35.cxb5 a4 36.g4 fxg4 37.fxg4 hxg4 38.h5 ♔d5 39.b6 ♔c6 40.♗e5 ♗g5 41.♗g7 ♔xb6 42.h6 ♗xh6 43.♗xh6 a3 44.bxa3 ♔a7! and it's still a joy that Fritz doesn't know this is a draw!

34...bxc4 35.bxc4 ♗f6 36.♗d2 ♗d8 37.♗c3 ♗c7 38.♔h3 ♔f7 39.♗d2 ♔g6 40.♗e3 ♗d6 41.♗g5

I didn't really have a plan, but putting my bishop on d8 and playing g4 felt right and didn't seem to harm anything.

41...♗e5 42.♗e7 ♗d4 43.♗d8 ♗c3 44.♗b6 ♗b4 45.g4

Black would rather not exchange f-pawns because it gives my king the e4-square. However, the king can't stay on g6 forever.

45...♗c3

45...fxg4+ 46.fxg4 ♔h6 47.♔g3! ♗e1+ 48.♔f3 ♗xh4 49.♗xa5. The problem for Black is that losing the a-pawn is always catastrophic.

46.♗xc5 ♗e1

Now I decided to put the bishop on d8, take on h5, and come with my king to d3. Then Black cannot take on h4 or prevent ♔d4-c5 without losing his a-pawn. Danny saw this coming and tried to stop it, but Black's position is already beyond repair.

47.♗d6 ♗c3 48.♗c7 fxg4+ 49.fxg4 ♗e1 50.♗d8 ♔h6 51.♗e7! ♔g6 52.♗g5!

It is pleasant to end the game with zugzwang. White keeps the extra pawn and the king now heads to the queenside with an easy win.
Black resigned.

Going into the last round, I was on +2, behind Epishin and Kotronias on +3. However, it seemed likely to me that Kotronias would draw with Kunte, especially after Kunte played what Kotronias called 'The New Petroff' i.e. the Berlin, so my task was to find a way past Epishin.

NI 23.3
Jonathan Rowson
Vladimir Epishin
Hastings 2003/04 (9)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d5

Epishin normally castles here but perhaps he was not in the mood for 5.e4!? which I ventured earlier in the tournament against Kunte.

5.a3 ♗e7?!

But this is definitely sub-standard. The move a3 is quite a big asset in several QGD structures.

6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.♗f4 c6

I thought this passive move was more or less forced but there is probably an improvement here. The value of a3 is shown in the line 7...dxc4 8.e4 ♘b6 9.♘b5! e5, when ♗b4 is not possible. However, 7...a6!? is playable: 8.cxd5 exd5 9.e3 (the joke is on White after 9.♘b5? axb5 10.♗xc7 ♗b4+! 11.♔d1 ♕e7) 9...0-0 10.♗d3 c5 when Black probably has a viable position.

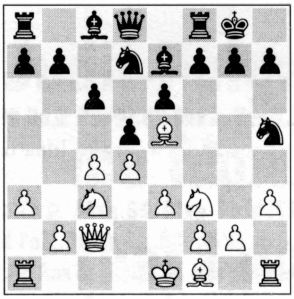
8.e3 ♘h5

Otherwise, after h3 the bishop will enjoy a very fruitful diagonal for the foreseeable future.

9.♗e5 9.cxd5 ♘xf4 10.dxc6 ♘xg2+ 11.♗xg2 bxc6 looks fine for Black.

9...0-0 10.h3!

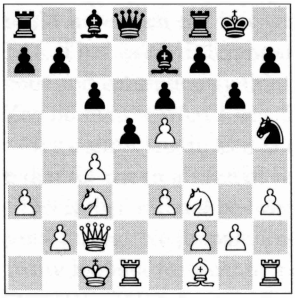
The exclam is for psychological restraint rather than objective strength. Some combination of ♗d3, g4 and cxd5 was tempting and probably good, but I had a feeling in my bones that I should be patient in this game, and I have found that my bones are often wiser than my brain.



10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 g6

11...f6!? is more combative: 12.g4 fxe5 13.♘xe5 ♕c7! is fine for Black and after 12.♗d3 g6 I don't see anything convincing. Hence, I would probably have contented myself with a more positional approach: 12.♗e2 fxe5 13.♘xe5. White will castle kingside and try to exert pressure on the centre, but without a dark-squared bishop I suspect my chances of being seriously better are slim.

12.0-0-0!?



12...b5!

A good practical decision which causes me some problems. 12...f6 13.g4 ♘g7 14.h4 seems to give White quite a dangerous initiative, e.g. 14...fxe5 15.♘xe5 ♗f6 16.f4 ♕c7 17.♕h2!.

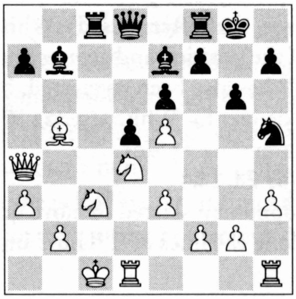
13.cxb5

I was tempted to keep the c-file closed with 13.g4!?, but the problem is that Black can generate an attack immediately: 13...♘g7 14.h4 bxc4 15.♗xc4 ♕a5 16.♗d3 ♖b8 and although 17.♘d4 prevents an immediate disaster, Black has the initiative here.

13...cxb5 14.♗xb5 ♗b7 This bishop does very little over the next few moves and it only functions well on b7 in conjunction with a timely f6. This may not be a mistake, but I was pleased to see it. 14...♗d7!? might be an improvement, after which I intended 15.♗xd7 (15.♗e2 ♕a5 with b and c-file action to follow, looks very dangerous) 15...♕xd7 16.♔d2!? when my king will hopefully be safe on e2.

15.♘d4 ♖c8 16.♕a4?!

'A real howler' according to Kotronias, because now if Black plays ♕b6 I can't play ♔b1 and my king remains under fire. Instead, 16.♔b1! seems to retain some advantage. I think at this stage I was still too attached to retaining the option of ♔d2-e2, but in unbalanced positions you need to be willing to burn a few bridges.



16...♖c5?!

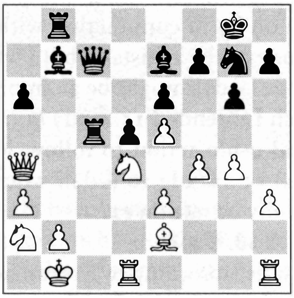
A multi-faceted move, designed to put the queen behind the rook and also to have ♖a5 resources. However, it is probably a mistake. Better was 16...♕b6! 17.g4 ♘g7 18.f4 f6 19.exf6 ♗xf6 20.♖d2 g5!?. Kotronias felt Black was better here, e.g. 21.♖hd1 a6 22.♗e2 gxf4 23.exf4 e5 24.fxe5 ♗xe5. He has the safer king, two bishops and all his pieces make sense, while all that White has is the burden of the knowledge that he has an extra pawn.

17.g4 ♘g7 18.♔b1 a6 18...♕b8 19.f4 ♖xc3 20.bxc3 a6 might have been the rationale for 16...♖c5, but this idea doesn't work: 21.♗d3 ♗c6+ 22.♕b3! ♗a4 23.♕xb8 ♖xb8+ 24.♔a2.

19.♗e2 ♕c7 20.f4 ♖b8

Black's attack doesn't convince, mainly because his knight and light-squared bishop play little part in it, while all of my minor pieces contribute to the defence.

21.♘a2! A safe move, removing any nasty ♖c3 ideas and sometimes planning ♘b4-d3 to overprotect b2.

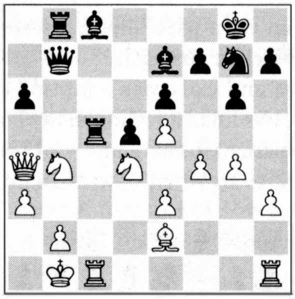


21...♗c8? 21...f6!? was Speelman's suggestion in *The Independent*: 22.exf6 ♗xf6 23.♖c1 (23. g5!? was given by Spess, but it doesn't seem necessary) 23...e5 24.♖xc5 ♕xc5 25.fxe5 ♗xe5. It is curious that Fritz 7 thinks this position is equal, despite Black's pawn deficit. It seems to me however, that after 26.♖d1 White has full control of the position and an extra pawn.

21...♕b6!? has also been suggested, but I don't see much danger for White after 22.♕b3!? ♕c7 23.♕d3 intending 24.♖c1.

22.♖c1 ♕b7 23.♘b4

Now my opponent started to move quickly and angrily, along the lines of 'I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down'. But it's already too late. Even though he outplays me over the next few moves, my position is good enough to absorb a few mistakes.



23...a5 24.♖xc5 ♗xc5 25.♕xa5 ♗b6 26.♕a4?! 26.♕b5! g5 27.♕d3 with the idea of ♗d1-c2 should end the game.

26...g5! 27.♕d1 gxf4 28.exf4 ♗d7 29.♕d2?! Better was 29.♕d3. **29...♗a5 30.♖c1 h6 31.♖c5! ♗xb4 32.axb4 ♕xb4 33.♕c3! ♕xc3 34.♖xc3 ♖b4 35.♖d3 ♗b5 36.♘xb5 ♖xb5 37.♖d4 ♖b8 38.b4 ♘e8 39.♔b2 ♔f8 40.b5 ♔e7**

Now I saw no defence to the plan of playing on both sides, since he never really threatens to take my b-pawn.

41.♖a4 ♘c7 42.h4! ♖b7 43.g5 h5!? 44.♖a5 d4 45.♗c4 ♘e8 46.♔b3 ♘g7 47.♗d3 ♘f5 48.♗xf5 exf5 49.♔c4 ♖d7 50.♔d3 ♖d5 51.♖a7+ ♔e6 52.♔c4 ♖d8 53.♖a6+ ♔e7 54.♖d6 ♖c8+ 55.♔b4 ♖c1 56.♖xd4 ♖h1 57.b6

Black resigned.

She is simply the First Lady of chess. Judit Polgar, the youngest of the three Hungarian sisters, is the only female player ever to be a serious world championship contender, and a member of the world top 10. In addition, her strikingly sharp attacking style has always made her games highly attractive to chess fans around the world. In New In Chess 2004/1 she was cornered by the magazine's Inquisitor-General, and sat down to speak about her remarkable career.

Judit Polgar: 'It was clear for me from a very early age that I was the lucky one'

Although the start of a new year traditionally urges us to look ahead, Judit Polgar would not mind wallowing a bit longer in the glorious memories of 2003. Having crossed the 2700 mark, she confidently raised her rating to a stunning 2728 and saw herself shoot up to the eighth spot in the world rankings. Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam visited a contented First Lady of Chess at her home in Budapest for a frank talk about the present, the past and the future. Enjoying a leisurely Christmas holiday with no tournaments on the horizon, Hungary's number one spoke at length about herself and her colleagues, grateful for the happy life she is leading but at times sharp and critical: 'The problem is that sometimes chess players do not even notice how selfish they are.'

'You should have seen me last year around this time. That was a different story. I was tense, nervous and continuously thinking about Wijk aan Zee no matter what I was doing.' Judit Polgar gives a short laugh, as if she still cannot believe that for the first time in years the final days of December will not be overshadowed by professional duties. 'No preparation, no nothing. I am really looking forward to a quiet and relaxed Christmas.' We're walking in one of the luxurious shopping streets in the centre of Budapest, where an unhurried crowd, warmly clad against the freezing cold, is hunting for last-minute presents. We've finished the interview at her home, and Judit's husband Gustav, who had managed to join us briefly for a tasty lunch (cooked by Judit!), has dropped us off before rushing back to his veterinary clinic. Judit is also in a bit of a hurry, as she has another appointment, but she doesn't mind having a look at the wine-shop where I spotted a bottle of Merlot from the excellent Polgar winery in Southern Hungary that also produces a lighter Portugieser and a more robust Cabernet Sauvignon. Polgar is not a very common name in Hungary, but it isn't a rarity either. Judit estimates that there are around 20 families with this name, which in Hungarian means 'citizen'. An interesting name for a family who had to fight the authorities for years and years to realize their wish of carrying out Laszlo Polgar's educational experiment. Especially the first years were tough for the three chess-playing sisters and their determined parents, but since all's well that ends well, one can say that their efforts have borne fruit. Certainly for citizen Judit who, after her marriage, moved from the Pest to the Buda side of the Hungarian capital, where she now has every right to feel herself to be the queen of the hill. From the living room of their splendid apartment in the First District she has a breathtaking view of the Buda Castle. It is here, in her apartment, that I went to visit her earlier that day to have a talk about the marvellous year she had in 2003. A year that took her to the eighth spot in the world rankings, the highest place, by a wide margin, ever occupied by a woman chess player. In the living room, we are surrounded by arty souvenirs from their travels in Africa and Indonesia, but the trophy that has already given many a visitor a fright spent its days in the Budapest zoo, where it died a peaceful death. On the floor a huge tiger, turned into a rug, silently roars at you with all its teeth bared. An apt companion, I cannot help thinking, for a player who, three years ago, saw herself described on the front page of *The Herald Tribune* as the 'tigress of the chessboard (who) purrs quietly and pounces'.

As she sits down on the sofa, Judit places her mobile close to her. In the past few days the Hungarian press has been after her, and she is, apparently, not averse to the attention they are lavishing on her. She's had a great year and she's proud of it. Her Elo will go up to 2728, and on the January list she will overtake Peter Leko to be the highest ranked Hungarian again. Of course she realizes this is not very helpful for Leko, who is still looking for sponsorship for his match against Kramnik, but such is life. Which automatically takes us to her popularity and the envy of the other Hungarian players it sometimes leads to. In New In Chess 2003/4, Istvan Almasi, reporting on the Courage and Talent tournament, could not hide his annoyance about the undisguised partisanship of the Budapest chess fans. Judit shrugs. 'This is something you cannot complain about. This is either something you get over the years or you don't. There are definitely a lot of people rooting for me. I worked for this for 20 years. To be honest, I didn't even feel it that much. There were not that many spectators in the playing hall. But I also started very well, and it had been a long time since I played in Hungary. I played some rapid matches, but the last serious tournament was in 1991, the Hungarian championship, which I won. And then I played this match against Spassky and that was all for the serious classical time-control.'

– *Is it because of the chess that they come to see you or is it still the former prodigy that kindles their enthusiasm?*

'I think those days are gone. Those were the days of the Polgar sisters, when I was very young and we were still together and it was something unique. Now I have to prove myself every time. Last year I played very well, so the papers wrote about me and my successes, but that was all. I am no longer as well-known as when I was young. When there was all this attention from the press, television shows, all these superficial things. Sometimes I still have to do that, you cannot only be known by your results, but I am not too eager to be on such shows anymore.'

– *You're happy in your personal life, you're happy with your results, do you still care what's going on in chess politics? Whether we have one World Champion, several or none?*

'Of course I care, but this has been going on for years now. The problem is that chess players can never reach an agreement. It's a very individual sport and of course in some ways you have to be selfish to be successful, but sometimes they do not even notice how selfish they are. They just go their own way and do not care about the others. That's why any players' organization should start from some general premises. Such an organization should be democratic, but the really important thing is that it should never depend on one person, be it Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik or whoever. The greatest achievement would be if even Kasparov would say, "No, I am no different from the others and this organization will even survive when I am gone." But this is the problem, because I understand that Kasparov has a huge influence. It's very difficult to keep chess alive professionally these days and I don't see the people who can get this organized. Some say it's a money problem, but I don't think this is so. Just you look at the Ilyumzhinov story. If he was really investing five or 10 million dollars in these events... I mean, for 10 million dollars you can make a cycle for five years and build up something seri-

Obviously well-trained – it seems that even Judit Polgar's pets are good at demolishing the opponent's position.

ous. When Ilyumzhinov came on the scene, we thought that at least he had the money, but this was just for survival, it didn't solve anything.'

– *You were elated when you reached 2700, but apparently it didn't take you long to get used to the feeling and in the meantime your rating has gone up to 2728. And your number of bêtes noires keeps diminishing. I think one of your crucial games in Wijk aan Zee was against Kramnik, against whom you have such a horrible score. You didn't lose your head and defended patiently to make a draw.*

'Yes, somehow I had more patience. It is true that this was a crucial game for me. I almost felt like I had won the game and I am pretty sure that for Kramnik it must have felt like he lost it.'

– *You also used to have a lousy score against Anand, but in Wijk aan Zee you went for his jugular in a game that was drawn and later in the year, in Mainz, the two of you played a fantastic rapid match without even a single draw that he won 5-3.*

'Well, thank God, it's already been quite some time since I had a bad score against him. Since 1997, in fact, when I first beat him after a long time. I mean, also before that time we had some interesting fights, but somehow the point would always be his. I think that nowadays it's a very equal game. He probably also has some psychological problems against me, as I had when I played him before. Even though I lost this match, which was very painful, it was one of the most interesting matches I have ever played.'

– *And in your next game in Cap d'Agde, where you beat him in the preliminaries, it was 'boom' again.*

'Yes. (Lingers, because she still wanted to add something) But actually this last round in Mainz was very painful. Basically every day we had the same schedule. The first game was at 6.30 and at 8 o'clock there was the second game. The last day the first game was delayed because the Open finished and there was a closing ceremony and a prize-giving. So we were waiting for some 10 minutes and then started the first game. Then we asked the arbiter when the next one would be, and he said, well nothing changes, eight o'clock. Of course, I understand, but we finished our game at 7.40 or 7.45. After every game I went up to my room, via a very long corridor, to check something in my computer or just to go to the bathroom. And now I did the same, stupidly enough. I had lost the seventh game and it was the first time that he took the lead. I went to my room and checked something in the Caro-Kann. And then I hurried back. And I am coming back and my time is running. It was 8.02 and they had started the clock. I understand that they are Germans and want to be precise, but when there was a delay before the seventh game they were in no hurry to do anything. And somehow I felt very bad about this. I had not expected this from the organizers or from Vishy. I think he could have said that there was no rush to push the clock. He already had less pressure because he was now leading. If you look at the game you can see how badly I played. I was so irritated. That was the bitterest part of it, that he didn't win it purely on the board. Of course it was my mistake to be two minutes late, but I mean...'

– *Probably Anand didn't want to get involved in this for fear of losing his concentration...*

'Yes. But he could have been a sportsman. I mean if I had won the seventh game again and he had behaved like this, I'd say, okay he tries everything. It hurt me that it was really a good tough match, and he was already very close to victory and it didn't occur to him to at least try to stop the arbiter from starting the clock.'

– *You've overcome your psychological problems against Anand and are working on it against Kramnik. What can a player do in this respect? Some mental coaching...*

'I don't know what can be done. I am working on it, but not with any special psychology... I am working on my openings, so that from the opening I get a normal position, where I can put pressure on my opponent or get him in a position that he feels uncomfortable in. Chess-wise I can improve in small things. Basically I have psychological problems with those guys, but they are also better than I am. Really better. Just look at their rating, even now. They are pretty much ahead of me. But before this they were miles ahead, so rating does say something.'

– *Do you also find it fun to play Anand? There are several similarities between the two of you. You are both very popular, you are not too interested in all these discussions about the world championship, you mainly want to play nice tournaments and enjoy life...*

'No, I don't see it from this perspective. Actually, I used to feel very good when I was playing with Shirov. We would always have incredible games, great fighting chess. I also won a lot of games against Shirov, but even when he beat me it was very interesting. Now it happens to be that Vishy and I play incredibly interesting games, because it's head to head in every game. Probably there are some similarities between us, but I feel for example that in Vishy's situation he could have done more for chess. He's incredibly diplomatic, but there are certain situations where you have to take your responsibility. You have to take some stance. Sometimes he should express some views, take some side. Being always diplomatic doesn't get you anywhere. Sure he is a nice, polite guy, people like him and everything, but... The same goes for Kramnik. He became World Champion and nothing really happened. I remember all these guys saying: "Once I am World Champion, I am going to change things." Of course it's not easy, it's very difficult...'

– *Kramnik says that he wants to stick to his plans to build some structure after he has played this match against Leko.*

'Yes, but the problem I see is that simply none of these guys is ready to give in. Which also goes for Kramnik. It's very nice that he beat Kasparov, it's incredible if you beat him in a match. Obviously Kasparov had some psychological problems against *him* (smiles). On the other hand, if you want to be a real champion then in my view you have to prove it again and again. And to be honest, I like Vladimir very much, a nice guy, but from this point of view, although he is the World Champion, he is not a real champion. He has hardly won a game since he beat Kasparov. He barely plays. Kasparov, well, okay, he is a character (laughs) with his good things and bad things, but you can never say that he is not a champion. He's going to tournaments, he is dedicated, he is fighting and he has to beat everyone. And that's why people like him and that's why champions like Kramnik or Anand cannot stand beside Kasparov and have the same financial demands. You cannot even compare them. Or even Karpov. I'm sure Karpov still gets better fees than many of the other guys, but in his good days he was such a great champion. I don't think people should be jealous of the money Kasparov makes playing the computer. Okay, they give it for him and for no one else. And chess is also profiting from this. Kramnik thinks, "Well, I beat Kasparov, so I am the World Champion", but he has to prove it. Life didn't stop.'

– *Perhaps I should look for a comparison between you and Kasparov. You're both the fighting type.*

'I am the fighting type, but I think that Garry also likes conflict situations, whereas I am not so eager to be there. Garry is working in all kinds of directions. To play matches, to do all kind of things, to create organizations, to destroy them, I mean everything. I am not so active in such things. I am ready to cooperate with organizations I like to support, but I am not going to create them.'

– *So far you've only won one game against Kasparov, but Karpov who used to be a difficult opponent in your earlier years has developed into one of your favourites.*

'Well, he's quite cooperative.'

– The turn-around came in Buenos Aires in 2000..

'That was a very nice game, but it was a draw. Of course I've been getting better and he's been getting weaker. And psychologically I am less tense these days. I had a bad score against him, but then I started making some draws. I also should have drawn this game we played in Buenos Aires in 2001 on September 11. Actually that was very strange, because even on that day he was in such a mood to fight while everyone else was just destroyed.'

– (Totally amazed) You already knew about the attacks and still played?

'Yeah. I went down to have lunch around noon and the organizer told me, "Did you hear what happened?" And there was some talk that perhaps we should not play, but Karpov didn't want this at all, saying "What's the reason?" I could understand him. Some horrible thing has happened but you cannot change anything, so why not finish the tournament? But many of the others were completely shocked and for me, too, it was unpleasant, as Susan was in New York. That was not a nice feeling, and also somehow it was a long game. The position was a draw, but he kept playing. And it was this control of 40 in two hours and 20 in one and then 30 minutes for the rest of the game. And I lost after 75 moves. It was not a nice day for me. But since then I've beaten Karpov a couple of times.'

'I also should have drawn this game we played in Buenos Aires, in 2001, on September 11.'

– So having witnessed his refusal to postpone a game on September 11, you must have had your own thoughts when last month he wanted to postpone his game in Benidorm.

'Well, for me this was ridiculous. I mean, I have respect for all the players and Karpov is a great player, a great historical person, but there are some things that you cannot do. Also the organizers were not very diplomatic, they were not ready to deal with this. But of course it was Karpov who was to blame. He was physically there and it was not such a terribly important tournament. We played in the reception area of the hotel with lots of noise and a 15-minute time-control. Good players, a good tournament, but it's not Linares. And then he comes and he says he wants to postpone because he is tired. It didn't involve me and I said: "Fine, I don't care, but I don't agree with it." And basically it was not enough that he ruined the tournament, which he essentially did, but the second game I play with him and he didn't say that he withdrew or anything and I just have to sit there for 15 minutes till his flag fell. And then to come down the next day and the day after to express his views what idiots the other players are. That they are not flexible and deserve the mess the chess world is in. But the media also behaved ridiculously. They interviewed him and didn't ask any of the other players their opinion.'

– Which takes us to Hoogeveen, where you won for the fourth time and scored a nice attacking victory against this same Karpov. It must have been a special feeling to finish off a legend like Karpov with a bishop sac on h7.

'Actually during the game it didn't feel as something special. I already had a very nice position and he was in time-trouble. I hadn't even considered his move that allowed the sacrifice. Of course I was very happy, but not because I won against him with this motif, but because I played a good game.'

– Did he find it totally embarrassing to lose this way?

'Probably, but it is hard to figure out what he thinks. He behaved very normally. He took it much harder when he didn't win the second game we played. That was a much bigger shock for him.'

– On several occasions you've said that one of the explanations for your recent successes is your personal happiness, your marriage. Could happiness also be the deathblow to ambition?

'If you try to be happy every moment of the day and want to be flying all the time, obviously that will be the death for your career. But the way I feel it is that it is so nice to have all this around me, and if in addition I work hard every day then my professional results will also benefit from this. That's only normal. I'm also getting older, more mature, calmer. I'm not so crazy anymore to sacrifice all my pieces. The beauty of chess is not the main part.'

– *But still an attacking game like the one against Berkes (see New In Chess 2003/4) must be a special kick.*

'Well, he is still a young player and much weaker than the opponents I am playing most of the time. Of course, when there is a big gap in strength you can allow yourself more freedom. And I also thought it was good, that it was working.'

– *Looking at your games of the past year I also saw some nice tactical finishes against Izeta and Fernandez.*

'Yes, but those were rapids.'

– *These were the kind of combinations that your father once showed you by the hundreds...*

'(Emphatically) Yes, yes. But this happens because they're much weaker. Usually when you play against Vishy or Kramnik, or Short or Bareev, or Radjabov, all those guys, you don't usually get these opportunities. Okay, this position against Berkes could also have happened against Bareev. But Berkes, who saw the idea, kind of just couldn't believe it. An experienced player would think, "Okay, I don't believe it, but if I don't see anything against it I will not allow it!" You simply get much more opportunities when you play inexperienced players.'

– *Two weeks from now Wijk aan Zee will start, a tournament where almost every grandmaster dreams to play. But you're happy to stay at home.*

'It's a great tournament, a great festival, but this time I decided to skip it. To clear my mind. It's nice to rest sometimes. But I'll be back.'

– *You're not staying away because your result might be worse than last year?*

'No, I have been playing chess for too many years to think this way. When I play I have to play for myself. I have my own expectations and that is what I try to reach. That's what you have to work on, not to be afraid. If you know that you have invested what was needed, it is not so bad if you lose.'

– *You're now running a household. How much of a housewife are you? When you're not at tournaments, do you do the cooking and the laundry?*

'Well, I'm a housewife who is also working and I am happy that I can afford to have someone who helps me. To clean the place, do the laundry. Everyday things like shopping are not that much fun, so I order them by the Internet and have them delivered. Cooking I like, but I do not do it every day because I am travelling too much. First I got some recipes from Susan and little by little I started cooking some pasta and things, and when I am travelling I try to see how they do it, and then I buy the ingredients and try to make it. Usually I don't cook anything special unless I have time. Then I like to be creative. Most of the time I think it is okay because I don't get any complaints.'

– *I can imagine that there are many aspects of running a household that must seem strange to you. After all, you were raised in a protective environment where your first job was to play chess.*

'Yes, but I've been living on my own for some years now and I also have my sisters who I can ask for advice. But I know the problem. Many young women don't cook, not because they don't know how, but because they don't like to cook. If you like to cook you will learn it. You find out about spices, you ask your mother. It's not so difficult to make a normal dish. To make something spectacular, with this and that and wine, you have to be a chef. But just to cook something normal you can learn without any trouble. But I know many women who don't like to cook. And the times that they do cook, their husbands probably don't encourage them by saying how good it was. This would inspire them definitely. I was very lucky that when I have cooked my husband always says how much he likes it. (Laughing) And he keeps telling me that this is not out of politeness!'

– *You're a married woman now who happens to be a professional chess player. Do you often think back to your prodigy days?*

'I don't think much about that, but sometimes you get to talk about it. And sometimes I wonder how good I was. Wow, I was 12 years old and scored 12½ out of 13 at the Olympiad! Wish I could do that now! Things like that.'

– *Do you ever think how lucky you've been? Just look at the bare facts: your father starts this educational experiment and you're one of the guinea pigs. Do you ever think what might have gone wrong?*

'Not really, because I am not thinking much about the past. Of course, our life was very difficult or at least very different. But I was never worried. First of all because in my career I was already very successful at a very young age. And of course for me it was the easiest. For Susan it was the hardest. Whenever someone was against my father's ideas, she would be the first to be hurt. It was clear for me from a very early age that I was the lucky one.'

– *Who do you resemble most, your father or your mother?*

'There is something of my father and something of my mother.'

– *Your father is an ambitious man. Is it correct to say that in this respect you take after him more than your sisters do?*

'Yes, but I also believe that these things are determined by the way your life is going. Various circumstances and what kind of results you achieve. How do you get your self-confidence. You see the good side of what you are doing if you have good results. That's different from working hard and seeing no results. This helps you to move on and this is why I think I became a better player than my sisters. Because I had very few negative experiences. I was just going up, up, up, and never going down. That's a very unusual feeling for a kid if simply everything is going well. It is probably also why I was such an attacking player, because I could afford it. I was playing opponents who were weaker, even if in rating they may have been higher. I could afford it because they made mistakes. What did I care if somebody said that I shouldn't go like an idiot with my g-pawns and f-pawns in every game? Why should I care when I won those games? When later on they beat me I realized that I had to make some changes. And so I did and I became more solid. To a large extent, this determined what I became. For me it was natural to sacrifice pieces here and there. After so many years I can only admire myself (laughingly). How could I play such games?'

'For me, it was natural to sacrifice pieces here and there.'

– *On a previous occasion I asked you about the experiment of your parents and you said that you were not sure if you would repeat it with children of your own, but that definitely you would teach them a lot at a very early age. Do you still have this intention?*

'Yeah (With a high laugh. Finally the inevitable subject seems to have cropped up!). Yes, probably I will teach them languages at an early age. And I will try to spend a lot of time with them. But it's unclear how that can be combined with my chess career, because I think that for quite some time I will stick with chess. Perhaps it would be best not to send them to school and to educate them yourself, but on the other hand this asks a lot of dedication and organizing.'

– *And the emphasis would be on a broad education. You wouldn't try to create a prodigy in something?*

'I don't know. Probably it will not be so specific. But most likely he or she will not be a chess player, a professional chess player, although they will learn to play chess. You never know, but somehow I think there are much more important jobs. To be a doctor or a scientist. There are a lot of more important problems than chess problems. Maybe something in computers, robots. Yes, that's it! (Laughing loudly at this sudden thought) I'd love to have a child who creates a robot that can do everything in the house, from cleaning to cooking!'

This hopeful look into the future seemed to be a suitable end to the interview and when she doesn't raise any objections, I switch off the tape-recorder. Teasingly I tell her that I hope she doesn't mind that I ignored the curiosity of quite a few of her colleagues (and doubtlessly many others) by not asking her if she is pregnant or any other question in that direction. On her guard, she flatly agrees that she doesn't mind. Then she says: 'But there is one thing I can tell you. Whenever it happens my pregnancy will definitely last longer than nine months.' And seeing my puzzled stare she goes on to explain with her contagious laugh: 'Because if I am to believe the press, I've already been pregnant for at least 15 months!'

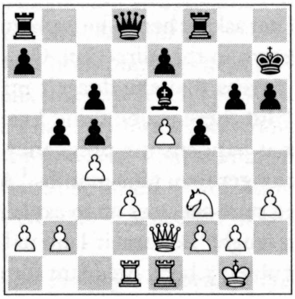
It is always exciting to see a young talent and potential world-beater, when they first emerge on the scene. Of course, the great majority of so-called prodigies end up barely achieving the GM title, let alone challenging for the world title. Occasionally, though, one sees a youngster who lives up to his promise. For those of us who saw Magnus Carlsen in his early years, there is nothing surprising in the fact that he is now in the world top five, despite still being only 18 years old. In 2004, aged just 13, he blew everybody away with his performance in the C Group at Wijk aan Zee. His best tournament so far, the Norwegian boy wonder called it, and he kindly accepted the invitation to write down his impressions of this historic exploit for New In Chess.

My Wijk aan Zee debut

Magnus Carlsen

Having read about this great tournament since 1999, I've always dreamed about coming to Wijk aan Zee and watching the big guys in action. Therefore I was very happy when the organizers found a place for me in the C-group this year.

In the first round I pressed with white against Lahno, but was unable to win the long endgame. Then, for the next 6 rounds, everything went my way, resulting in 5 wins (of which 3 against strong GMs) and one draw. After the win against Pavlovic in Round 3, I felt quite confident throughout the tournament.



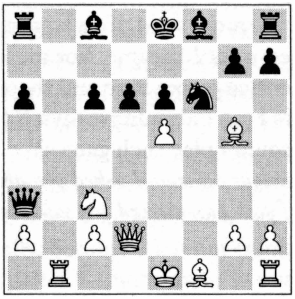
Pavlovic-Carlsen
position after 18...b5

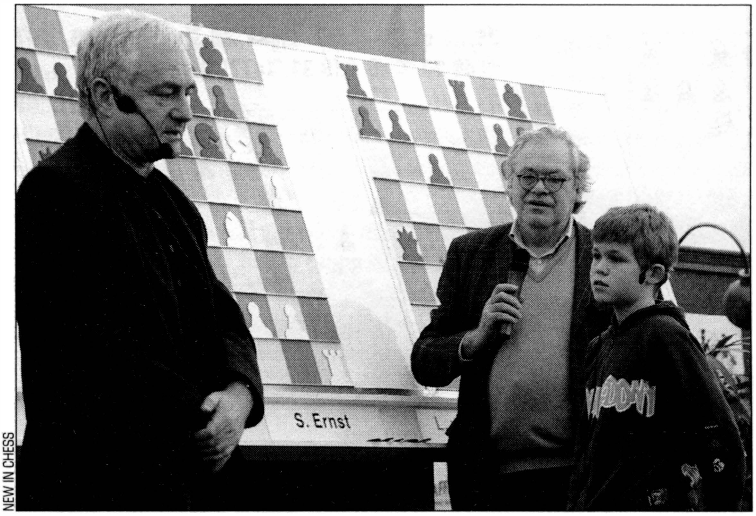
In this position Pavlovic optimistically tried **19.cxb5 cxb5 20.d4 c4 21.d5 ♗xd5 22.e6** maybe having missed the reply **22...♕d6** after which he never got compensation for the pawn.

In round 4, I met GM Popov as White, and I fortunately decided not to fear my highly-rated opponent and went for a sharp Najdorf.

SI 8.8
Magnus Carlsen
Valery Popov
Wijk aan Zee C 2004 (4)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 ♕b6 8.♕d2 ♕xb2 9.♖b1 ♕a3 10. f5 ♘c6 11.fxe6 fxe6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.e5

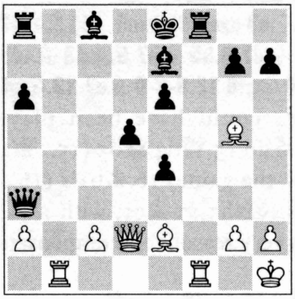




NEW IN CHESS

Genna Sosonko (l.) and Hans Ree are duly impressed as 13-year-old Magnus Carlsen explains his brilliancy against Ernst in front of hundreds of enthusiastic spectators in the Corus Pavillion.

13...♘d5 This is quite a rare move and at this point I was out of theory. 13...dxe5 14.♗xf6 gxf6 15.♘e4 ♗e7 16.♗e2 h5 has been considered good for Black since it was introduced by Fischer. However, 17.♖f1 (see Yearbook 68) is very interesting and has renewed White's interest in this old line. Popov tried 15...♕xa2 16.♖d1 ♗e7 against Pavlovic later in the tournament, but the result was no better. **14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♗d3!?** 15.♗e2 is the normal line, but I saw no reason not to put the bishop on d3. This move also keeps the possibility to play ♕f2 later. **15...dxe5 16.0-0 ♗e7 17.♔h1!?** With the idea of 18.♕f2 ♗xg5 19.♕f7+ ♔d8 20.♕xg7. **17...e4 18.♗e2** Threatening 19.♕d4. **18...♖f8**



19.c4!

Opening all lines. The position is very difficult to defend and even the computer prefers White here!

19...dxc4 This loses instantly. 19...♖xf1+ 20.♖xf1 ♗b7 gives White a pleasant choice between 21.♕f4 and 21.♗g4. **20.♖xf8+ ♔xf8** 20...♗xf8 21.♗h5+ g6 22.♕d8+ ♔f7 23.♖f1+ ♔g8 24.♕e8 ♖a7 25.♕xc8 is game over. **21.♕f4+ ♔e8 22.♖f1 ♖a7** 22...♗xg5 23.♕f7+ ♔d8 24.♖d1+ forces 24...♕d3. **23.♕f7+ ♔d7** 23...♔d8 24.♕f8+ ♔d7 25.♖d1+ is even worse. **24.♖d1+** 24.♗xc4 also wins rather simply. **24...♔c6 25.♕e8+ ♔b6** Understandably, Popov didn't want to suffer the hopeless endgame after 25...♗d7 26.♕xe7 ♕xe7 27.♗xe7. **26.♕xc8** Black resigned in view of 26...♗xg5 27.♕xe6+ and Black will have to suffer enormous material losses to avoid mate.

In Round 7, I was hard pressed as Black against Gagunashvili. At one point I had a losing position, but Gagunashvili failed to take advantage of this and went further astray in time-trouble. After the time control he was simply losing. Next I played Werle and having secured my first GM-norm I could relax and concentrate on the game without thinking about the result.

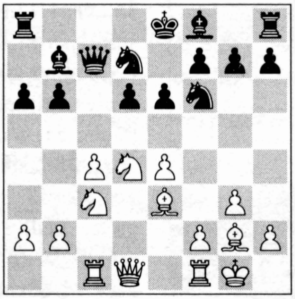
SI 41.15
Magnus Carlsen
Jan Werle
Wijk aan Zee C 2004 (8)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 Werle usually plays the Classical Sicilian. **3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.c4** Kasparov's favourite move.

5...♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 If Black wants to play the Hedgehog, then 6...♕c7 7.a3 (7.♗e2 ♗b4 is OK for Black) 7...d6 is more accurate.

7.g3 ♕c7 8.♗e3 b6 9.♗g2 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 10...♕xc4 11.♖c1 is unplayable for Black.

11.♖c1



11...♗e7?! 11...♖c8 is better, but White would have an advantage anyway. For instance, after 12.f4.

12.♘d5! exd5 12...♕b8 13.♘xe7 ♔xe7 should also be clearly better for White and 12...♕d8 13.e5 is also strong.

13.cxd5 ♕b8 13...♕d8 is no better.

14.♘c6 ♗xc6 15.dxc6 ♖a7 15...♘c5 16.c7 ♕xc7 17.e5 loses the exchange. 15...♘e5 16.c7 ♕c8 (or 16...♕b7) 17.f4 ♘eg4 18.♗d4 threatens e5 and material gain.

16.cxd7+ ♘xd7 17.♗h3!?

I didn't want to give the c5-square to the black knight, combined with a5 protecting the queenside.

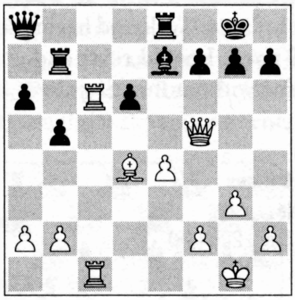
17...0-0 18.♗xd7 ♖xd7 19.♕d5

Black has no counterplay.

19...b5 20.♖c6 ♕a8 21.♖fc1 ♖fd8?!

21...♗f6 should have been tried.

22.♗b6 ♖e8 23.♕f5! ♖b7 24.♗d4



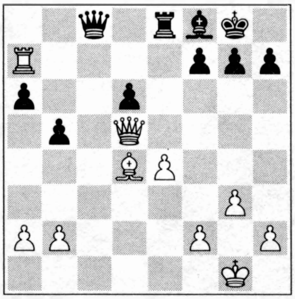
24...♗f8?

A bad move, but it was hard to give any good advice. White dominates.

25.♖c8 ♖b8? 26.♖8c7?

I had lots of time on the clock, but even so I failed to find 26.♖1c7! f6 27.♖xg7+! ♗xg7 (27...♔xg7 28.♕xf6+ ♔g8 29.♖c7) 28.♕e6+ mating.

26...♖e7 27.♖xe7 ♗xe7 28.♖c7 ♖e8 29.♕d7 ♕d8 30.♕c6 ♗f8 31.♖a7?! ♕c8 32.♕d5



32...♕e6?!

With so little time left, it is understandable that Black chose to simplify, but the endgame is hopeless for him.

33.♕xe6 ♖xe6 34.f3 d5? 35.♖a8! ♖c6 36.exd5 ♖c7 37.♗c3

Black resigned.

In Round 9 I lost against Pavasovic and then met the two lowest-rated opponents before facing co-leader Ernst in the penultimate round. At this point we both had 9 out of 11, and as Ernst had beaten third-placed Smeets the round before, this was the C-group final.

CK 12.5
Magnus Carlsen
Sipke Ernst
Wijk aan Zee C 2004 (12)

1.e4 c6

A surprise on the first move! I had prepared for the Open Ruy Lopez.

2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♗f5 5.♘g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 e6 11.♗f4 ♘gf6 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.♘e4 ♕a5

13...♘xe4 could have been played, when 14.♕xe4 ♘f6 15.♕d3 ♕d5 (15...♕a5 16.♔b1 0-0 is like the game) 16.♔b1!? (16.c4 is more usual) 16...♘xh5 17.♗c1, with 18.♘e5 to follow, gives very reasonable compensation for the pawn.

14.♔b1 0-0 15.♘xf6+ ♘xf6

Not 15...♗xf6 16.g4!.

16.♘e5

16.g4 anyway was introduced by Polgar against Anand in Wijk aan Zee 2003, but thinking that

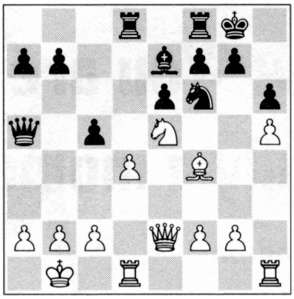
Ernst clearly knew more about this line I decided on a quieter line.

16...♖ad8 17.♕e2

This was the last move that I knew, but I had already spent 45 minutes on what line to choose.

17...c5?!

17...♕b6 18.c3 (18.♖d3 was recommended by annotators, but it seems to be possible to take the pawn with 18..♖xd4 19.♗e3 ♖e4! with just about enough compensation for the pawn) 18...c5 was definitely a better route to take for Black.



18.♘g6! Of course!

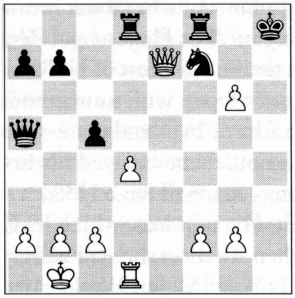
18...fxg6? Here 18...♖fe8 19.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 20.dxc5 was a long way from full equality.

19.♕xe6+ ♔h8 20.hxg6! Black is in fact defenceless here. **20...♘g8**

The best try. 20...♖d7 or 20...♖de8 both lose to 21.♖xh6+ gxh6 22.♗xh6 ♖g8 23.♕f7 cxd4 24.♗g5! (in the latter case 22...♕b6 23.g7 ♔h7 24.gf8♕ ♗f8 25.♕f7 ♔h6 26.f4! mates).

21.♗xh6! gxh6 22.♖xh6+! The real point.

22...♘xh6 23.♕xe7 ♘f7 The only move.



24.gxf7!

Interestingly, 24.♕f6+? ♔g8 25.♖h1 ♘h6 26.♕e7 ♘f7 27.♕f6 had occurred before in a game Almagro Llanas-Gustafsson, Madrid 2003, and is only a draw.

24...♔g7

24...♕b6 25.♕e5+ ♔h7 26.♖h1+ ♔g6 27.♖h5, when to avoid mate Black has to give the queen with 27...♕f6 28.♖h6+ would result in a lost endgame.

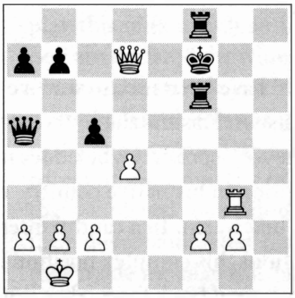
25.♖d3?! 25.♕e5+! ♔xf7 26.♖d3 would have forced 26...♕e1+ to avoid mate.

25...♖d6 Loses a lot of material on the spot, but the best try 25...♕b6 26.♖g3+ ♕g6 27.♖xg6+ ♔xg6 28.d5 wins easily as well.

26.♖g3+ ♖g6 27.♕e5+ ♔xf7 27...♔h7 28.♕h5+ ♖h6 29.♕f5+ ♔h8 30.♕e5+ mates.

28.♕f5+ ♖f6? 28...♔e7? or 28...♔e8? are both followed by 29.♖e3+.

29.♕d7+



Quite a nice mate!

After this I had a one-point lead and the better tie-break, but I also wanted to play a proper game in the last round. My last game as Black against Smeets, although in fact quite short, was an eventful draw. Having finished on 10½ out of 13, I exceeded the GM norm by one point and had had my best tournament ever.

The excellent playing conditions clearly contributed to my good result, and I thoroughly enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and the presence of the world stars in the same room.

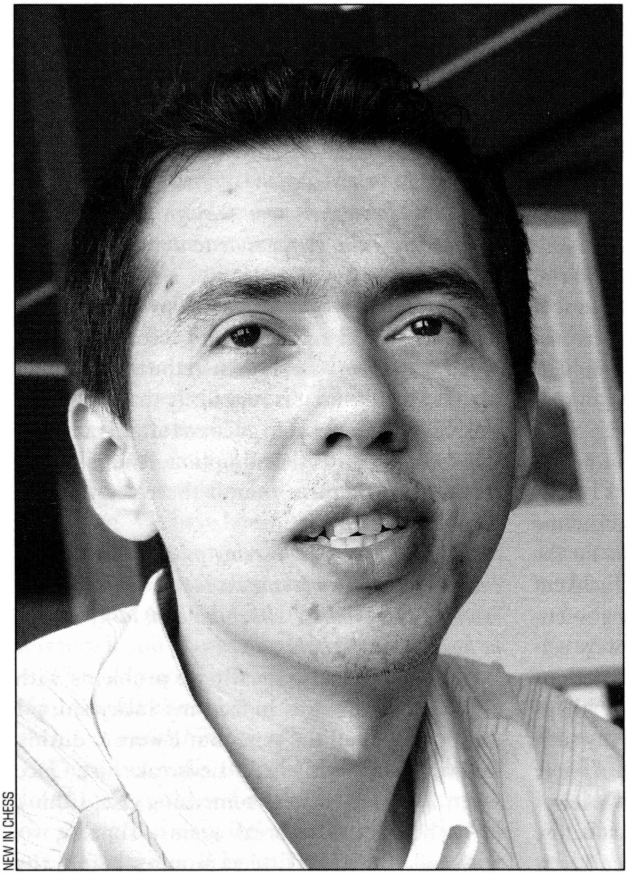
The FIDE knockout world championships are not everybody's idea of how the world chess championship should be decided, but over the years, they have certainly thrown up some great stories and surprise champions. In 2004, it was the turn of Rustam Kasimdzhanov to upset the odds. When he spoke to New In Chess about his triumph, the highly intelligent Uzbek GM showed the same calm level-headedness that had served him so well in Tripoli. Yes, that's right – the world chess championship was held in Tripoli!

Rustam Kasimdzhanov: 'You are at the highest point for only a moment'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

It would have been nice to survive a couple of rounds in Tripoli and make some money, but instead Rustam Kasimdzhanov went the full stretch to become the new FIDE World Champion. Still, the soft-spoken Uzbek does not expect his life to change drastically. Except for a warm reception in his native country, reactions to the greatest success in his career have been mainly lukewarm. In a candid interview the new champion gives his views on his confirmed expectations, his complex position in the chess world and the things that really matter in life. 'Reading a good book for me has inner value and public relations on the other hand not always. That's why I have been rather ignoring the second and preferring the first.'

The spacious apartment overlooking the beach and the boulevard six stories below has every appearance of a fitting abode for Rustam Kasimdzhanov during his first tournament after Tripoli. The new FIDE World Champion, his wife and their two-year-old son are delighted by the luxurious lodgings the Vlissingen organisers have provided. They feel at home, as can be seen from the toys spread all over the floor and the wide choice of fruits and sweets on the dinner table. Kasimdzhanov acts relaxed, but he claims to be exhausted: 'People told me that it would take me at least half a year to recover and I didn't believe them. I'm young and healthy, why should that be? But now I'm beginning to understand.' The place where he is staying may be fitting for a world champion, but what about the tournament he is playing in? The Hogeschool Zeeland tournament in the South-West of Holland is a fairly inconspicuous Open with nine grandmasters, a similar number of IM's and many more amateur players. Kasimdzhanov played his first game as FIDE champ against Hotze Hofstra with a rating of 1913. His first loss, which he is still unaware of when we meet, he will suffer in Round 7 against Dutch IM Jan Werle. Any manager would have strongly advised him to cancel his participation in an event where he has nothing to win, but Kasimdzhanov did not think for even a second about withdrawing: 'I can give you many reasons why I think I should play in Vlissingen, whereas I do not think so many reasons can be



Rustam Kasimdzhanov, trying to lead a quiet life with some inner value.

given for not playing. First of all, it was a commitment I took a long time ago. Also these are very good friends of mine, they did a lot for me in the past. Thirdly, I like to play chess and as for the level of the tournament, I built up my chess strength playing in such tournaments mainly. Choosing my tournaments more carefully now would be more of an issue if after the world championship I received lots of invitations. But as I didn't receive a single invitation anywhere I assumed it would be much wiser to continue as before. I do not think that the situation for me personally will change greatly.'

– You didn't get any invitations? That must have been a great disappointment.

'I have expected this. Nowadays the situation in the chess world is the same as in all other spheres of modern life. It's not about your strength or your success anymore, it's all about your PR. And this I never cared for. That's why they somehow don't want to see me. When I had a high rating they were saying he is not having major successes and when I have major successes they will say I do not have a high rating. And when I will have both, they will say that the quality of my games is bad. They do not know me. I do not play on the ICC, which seems to be the main platform to attract attention these days. I'm not involved in any scandals, so they just don't know me. And also my name is very long and difficult to pronounce. I can give you an example. In 2002 I played in Pamplona and I shared first place with Bologan. The organizers came to us and though it was not in the regulations they said they would really like us to play a blitz match to define the winner. We said okay, we sit down to play this blitz match and I win 2-0. So I am declared the winner of Pamplona. The next year I didn't hear from them and Bologan gets invited to the tournament. Bologan is a good friend of mine and it's fine with me that he played, but I don't see why they never contacted me and why they made me play this blitz match. Once I had won their tournament I didn't fit into their plans anymore. The same goes for Sarajevo. Last year it was a very strong tournament. I won three games, made six draws and was very close to winning the tournament. But they did not say anything and didn't invite me back. I have very good relationships with all of them, never quarrelled with them. I just do not understand how they think. When I was playing badly in Wijk aan Zee people were saying that I wouldn't be invited back because I played badly. I didn't think this was the truth. It's something completely different. I do not know what they want, but apparently this is not something I am giving them. Even Opens do not want to see me.'

– You say you have no plans to change your way of life. Still, becoming world champion must have affected you. Do you occasionally wake up in the middle of the night and look at yourself as a different person?

'No, not really. My position as connected to Uzbekistan has changed a bit. For them it is very important and they are really trying to help me as much as they can. For chess and sport in Uzbekistan this is really a great catalyst. As for me personally, I do not think that this result or any other result, should make me change my ways.'

– *What kind of reactions have you had around you?*

'The reception in Uzbekistan was very warm. On my return from Tripoli I received a number of phone calls in Solingen from representatives of the government of Uzbekistan saying it would be very nice if I came. Basically, the way my government see it is that I showed most decisively what Uzbekistan is. It still is a very young country and needs getting known. Just like me (starts laughing). They invited me to come. They picked me up in Solingen and paid first class tickets for the whole family to Tashkent and back. At Tashkent airport there were many members of the government and a huge crowd. After this there were celebrations to no end and I saw from the reactions of all kinds of people that they were very happy. In Germany, where I spend most of my time nowadays, the reaction was a bit different. There were good reactions and bad. Somehow a lot of filth and envy was spilled in the press. Just before the tournament I had changed my club and after I won the championship my former club, Solingen, suddenly started to value me. They started to blacken me in all possible ways. On TV, in the local press, on the Internet, that basically I was wrong to leave them. Apparently they had different ideas about my freedom. I was seriously dissatisfied with the way I was treated in my former club and I felt compelled to leave and went to Bad Godesberg (playing in the second Bundesliga – DJtG). As for the reaction of the chess world, the fact that there has not been a single invitation in 30 days in my opinion tells a lot about the chess world's reaction.'

– *And you just try not to care.*

'It's what I expected, so in a way it even makes me proud that I anticipated this.'

– *Do you remember with what expectations you went to Tripoli?*

'Of course I did not expect I'd be able to win this. I thought I should be mentally ready to lose and go home any given round. I think I managed this and this greatly helped. Once you are reconciled that you can lose any given round you are basically freed from the fear of losing.'

– *You may be too free from fear.*

'To me personally fear doesn't do any good. I should be concentrated, enjoying myself, but I should not be afraid.'

– *When you go there, you may go for three days, but you may also go for close to a month. How do you pack?*

'I assumed I was going there for one week and made my travel arrangements accordingly. If I win the first two rounds then in the third round I play Ivanchuk and it is very likely that I may lose this. So, I had a ticket to go home after Ivanchuk. This was my general assumption. And if I don't lose in the first three rounds there's nothing to complain about.'

– *At some point I kept seeing pictures on the official website of you wearing the same shirt for several rounds. I was thinking, either this is his lucky shirt or he has run out of clothes.*

'(Laughs) I had basically no problems with clothes, but this was indeed my lucky shirt. I didn't wear it all the time, but I wore it during tie-breaks. It was my lucky tie-break shirt. Once when I wanted to wear something else, I think it was before the tie-break against Topalov, my wife called me just fifteen minutes before the game and insisted I wore this shirt. I told her that if anything goes wrong with this you will be responsible and she said, yes, I will be responsible.'

– *At the closing ceremony you were wearing a suit. Did you have one made in Tripoli?*

'No, I had it with me all along. This is the kind of thing your wife puts into your suitcase. I would not have taken it.'

– *Could you say that most chess players go to the championship thinking they are going to a strong tournament with good prize money, and it's only after the last day that the winner thinks that it was a world championship?*

'I doubt this. I think players are different. Some go there to earn money, some go to survive a couple of rounds, some go there to win the tournament and be world champion. I really think that Topalov was not thinking about anything else. To him this was a tournament with seven knockout rounds and he envisaged them all. He went there to win this tournament. To him it was pretty much the same to lose in the second round or in the sixth, because he wanted to win this. Also when Anand plays such an event he doesn't think about prize-money and all this. He largely concentrates on winning the tournament. For minor players, like I am and the rest, money plays a role. Also we do not dare to envisage going to the final and all this. It would be nice to survive a couple of rounds and earn some money.'

– *After you won you pretty soon started speaking about your duties as a champion. What duties do you feel you have?*

'I think this word had a slightly different touch to it in the context I used it. What I feel now, as there is some attention to me as a chess player, is that it is my duty as a world champion to play chess. That I should not sit at home just enjoying what I am. We have lately been forgetting about this, but it is nice when top players play chess, more than one tournament a year. They play Linares and two exhibition matches, but I think it is nice if you play as much as you can.'

– *Where do you see yourself? Do you see yourself in this line of the champions of the past or in this branch that started with Khalifman?*

'I have not really thought about this. I do not create such pictures. I do not think that so much has changed. I only feel that for the promotion of chess it is nice if I play, but I would also have done this had I not won Tripoli.'

– *Would you be willing to achieve certain changes exploiting your position within FIDE? For instance I don't know many strong players who are in favour of the FIDE time-control and I remember an old interview in which you also called it totally ridiculous.*

'I do not really like this time-control, but I do not think that I am in the position to change much. If I were in a position to change something I would start with suggesting another day for the tie-breaks. This would already be quite something. As for time-limits, nobody knows where they come from. I don't know for what strange reason we had to have this time-control we never had before.'

– *I think this is an essential problem in the chess world, where in fact everyone would like to see FIDE as a competent governing body. In this championship there have been complaints about the time-control and you rightly pointed out that it's pretty tough to have the tie-breaks on the same day. Yet, the only sounds I heard from the FIDE camp is that they are thinking about doubling the number of participants in the championship. They always manage to create the impression that essentially they don't care about chess at all.*

'I do not know. Of course, most of what you say is just, but on the other hand, who has been doing more for chess? You can say that FIDE and its world championships are wrong, that Linares for instance is better for chess. But I could give you a hundred reasons why it is not. FIDE has been subject to a lot of criticism and partly rightly so, but who has been doing more? Now you have this ACP. Their aims sounded very reasonable to me and I joined them, but what they did before the European and World Championship was of the most dubious character. They were trying to dissuade the players from taking part. You cannot do this as an organisation that offers nothing reasonable instead.'

– *In Tripoli you revealed that you didn't have any real opening preparation. You were preparing as the event developed and tried to surprise your opponents with openings you do not normally play. That is not the way to go about it in a match against an experienced player like Kasparov. Are you going to build a team..*

'I'm not sure yet. In Tripoli I was alone and probably this will not happen, because it felt a bit lonely towards the end. I won't be alone but I have no idea whether this will be one person or more...'

– *Do you expect the match to take place?*

'Yes. I feel this match will take place for different reasons. I need it, as far as I can see FIDE needs it, and also Kasparov needs this match to take place. If all parties involved want to play then usually it does take place, doesn't it? Especially if Kasparov participates the financial side should not be a problem.'

– *Sponsors may think that Kasparov is too clear a favourite.*

'First of all, Kasparov is considered the big favourite in every match. I don't think he is less of a favourite to win, let's say against Adams than against me. Still, in any other sport this might be questioned. They would ask what is his recent match record. He lost this match against Kramnik and this match against Ponomariov did not happen. This match against Kramnik was already four years ago.'

– *In the previous issue I wrote that at the end of the match several FIDE officials were quick to mention that you are a Muslim. Maybe they will try to raise money in the Muslim world?*

'I have no idea what they've been trying to do. I know that the city of Dubai was mentioned, but I have no idea whether it was mentioned for its connection to the Muslim world or anything else. In fact I tend to doubt this. Because the city of London was mentioned as well.'

– *How Muslim are you?*

'(Without any hesitation) I would not like to touch this subject.'

– *Because it is a touchy subject in Uzbekistan?*

'No, just because this is a personal matter. I don't like to speak about it.'

– *In Uzbekistan you were received by a mullah. Doesn't such a welcome have religious overtones?*

'It does. Uzbekistan is largely a Muslim country. This mullah has two sides to him, a religious side and just a traditional side. Any elderly person in our tradition is to receive his blessing.'

– *You said that you were partying every night in Uzbekistan...*

'Not partying in the usual sense of the word.'

– *Normally you don't drink.*

'Normally not, no.'

– *It has been suggested that one of the reasons you did so well in Tripoli was that while for many players the place must have been pretty exotic, for you it felt very much like being in Tashkent.*

'Yes, I felt that Tripoli in atmosphere and otherwise was very close to Tashkent. I felt quite at home. I was acquainted with the overall tradition, with the manner of driving for instance, and especially the food was very much to my liking.'

– *Whereas many players were stuck in the hotel, not knowing their way about, it was easy for you to find your places.*

'I just felt at ease. I didn't see the point of locking myself up in the hotel. That just didn't occur to me.'

– *Despite the fact that you are world champion now, there are probably not many chess fans who have any idea who you are. Suppose you were to introduce yourself, what would you tell them?*

'I lead a very quiet life, I respect my privacy. I read a lot, I spend a lot of time with my family. I do not like travelling. I never go to discos or bars. I try to lead a reasonable life that has some inner quality and value. Based on my feelings. I feel that for me some things have inner value and some don't. Reading a good book for me has inner value and public relations on the other hand not always. That's why I have been rather ignoring the latter and preferring the former.'

– *You are fond of English and German literature. Could you name some books that may shed some light on what kind of person you are?*

'With German literature this is easier, because there I have clear preferences. I am very much impressed by Kafka. Almost everything he wrote, but mainly *The Castle*, *The Trial* and the short stories. I first read them in Russian and once I had a decent command of German I reread them in German, which was an entirely new experience. Also *Joseph and his Brothers* by Thomas Mann was an important book for me. In English literature I have read a lot more, but perhaps precisely because of that my preferences are not so clear-cut. Some years ago I was really fond of James Joyce, but this has more or less passed. Surprisingly, I am fond of Nabokov's *Lolita*. I think it is a really profound book and largely underestimated. And I'm fond of poetry, for instance the Irish poet Yeats. I have been reading more or less everything that I could get hold of in 19th and 20th century English and American literature.'

– *What was the first piece of music you played after you became world champion?*

'During the whole tournament I was listening to the Russian poet and singer Vladimir Vissotsky.'

– *Ah, preparing for Kasparov already...*

'I have no idea about Kasparov's preferences but this was what I have been listening to during and after the tournament.'

– *What is your favourite Vissotsky line?*

'It's difficult to translate it into English. It was what struck me during the sixth game against Adams. He has a song called 'The Song of the High-Jumper'. He jumps and he doesn't quite manage. He wanted to make 2.12 and fails. And he says, I will let you in on a small secret: such is the life of a sportsman or woman. You are at the highest point for only a moment, and then you fall down again. When I played ♕g8 and thought I was losing, this immediately rang in my ears. You are at the highest point for only a moment.'

It was another of those 'Do you remember where you were when…?' days. I came into the office on an ordinary-seeming morning, switched on the computer, fetched a cup of coffee, and then, like every self-respecting amateur chess player arriving at work, the first thing I did was to look on TWIC to get the chess news. And there it was, in bold letters: 'Kasparov quits professional chess'. The greatest player ever had quit. Just a month earlier, he had announced his retirement from the world championship, but now it was not just 'Au Revoir', it was 'Goodbye'.

The day Kasparov quit

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

'I want to make a short statement before the press conference. I think it could be sort of a surprise for many of you, but before this tournament I made a conscious decision that Linares 2005 will be my last professional event and today I played my last professional game. I hoped I could do better in the last game but unfortunately the last two games were very difficult for me to play under such pressure, because I knew it was the end of the career of which I can be proud. So, that's it.' With exactly these words Garry Kasparov announced the end of his professional chess career on Thursday, March 10, 2005. The first people to hear this stunning news were a dozen or so journalists and a similar number of bystanders. In the hours that followed the entire world was informed and the avalanche of reactions expressing utter surprise and deep admiration were further testimony of the global fame of the greatest chess player in history. For 20 long years Garry Kasparov was at the peak of his profession, a feat unparalleled in any sport.

The last round of the 22nd 'Ciudad de Linares' tournament has finished and the press room is humming with activity. Radio reports are phoned in, newspaper stories must be filed, deadlines have to be met. At 9.15 pm Paco Albalate, who has been working at the tournament for as long as I can remember, walks in to tell us that in 10 minutes or so there will be a press conference. A press conference? By who? I wonder. The only person I can think of is Veselin Topalov, who feels he's the moral winner of the tournament after his last-round win over Kasparov, no matter what the idiosyncratic tie-break system will decide. He already told me so half an hour ago, providing me with several good quotes. Not Kasparov, surely. He tied for first with Topalov, but he'll be declared tournament winner because he won more games with black. Yet the silly loss against the Bulgarian that robbed him of outright first place will certainly have spoiled his mood.

There seems to be little sense in trudging down the stairs of the Anibal hotel for the umpteenth time to go to the playing hall, where the press conference will be held. Still, giving in to a hunch that I can't specify, that's exactly what I do 10 minutes later. On the stage, Peter Leko and Paco Vallejo are still analysing their game, which was the last to be concluded. In front of the stage microphones are being put on a table. Looking around I spot Kasparov who is quietly making a call on his mobile. What is *he* doing here? Will he join Topalov at the press conference? As I walk up to his entourage, his mother, Klara Kasparova, suddenly starts to cry vehemently. Sobbing she says that she can't stand the idea of a life without chess after 30 chess-filled years. Only now do I understand what is going to happen, and I become aware of an awkward feeling taking hold of me. Chess without Kasparov? It feels both frightening and unnatural.

The atmosphere seems to be permeated with similar sentiments when, minutes later, we listen to Kasparov's announcement. His laconic, 'So, that's it', is followed by a long moment of deathly silence. Finally, someone asks how he has come to his decision. Speaking easily, Kasparov replies, 'It's very difficult to quote one reason. If I try I could tell you that as you know I am a man of big goals. I have to achieve something, I have to prove something, I have to be determined. I no longer see any real goal in the world of chess. I didn't want to leave in a bad shape, like six months ago, I wanted to be back to my top rating and I wanted to show some decent chess. I wanted to prove for myself first of all that I play better than the others. I did. What's happened today had very little to do with my opponent. I simply collapsed under the pressure of playing the last game. And also, as you will understand, the complete mess of the last two years added bit by bit to my frustration. It seemed to me that everybody was very pleased when I was constantly denied chances to play for the highest title. What's happened with FIDE in the past years was scandalous and I didn't hear a single voice of concern or support for Garry Kasparov. I still read about the bad treatment by FIDE of Ponomariov, but I never heard anything serious about how they treated me. After the Prague Agreement I had regular disappointments with the entire process, and this process was used for advancing the agenda of others, eventually at my expense. I want to live my own life. I recognize that in the nearest future there will be no chance for a reunified title and frankly speaking there is nothing else I can hope for in the world of chess.

'I haven't lost my passion for chess, so maybe from time to time I could play for fun, definitely in some rapid tournaments. But it should be only for fun. And I want to accomplish more on the writing side. I want to complete my work, *My Great Predecessors*. The project is expanding every year and I want to spend more time on it. And by the end of this year my new book should appear in 15 languages, including Spanish of course, and even Chinese and Japanese. A book with the tentative title *How Life Imitates Chess*. This book is a very important project because I want to demonstrate to a mainstream audience how the game of chess could explain the decision-making process in many walks of life.'

In addition he is asked if he has any political plans. 'I will spend a certain time on Russian politics. I have some ideas and I could allocate some of my time to these activities. I believe that any decent and honest person must join the opposition to the dictatorship of President Putin.'

Kasparov gives his answers without a tinge of emotion. The words come naturally, he smiles a lot and even seems relieved. One time only he briefly has to fight against his tears. An inhabitant of Linares uses the silence between two questions to say 'Thank you for your chess', and a visibly touched Kasparov replies 'Thank you, thank you.' For the rest he remains in control, as he will during the closing ceremony the next day, although there, too, he has a weak moment when Don Luis Rentero joins him on stage and announces that henceforth the playing hall will be called the Sala Garry Kasparov and the hotel suite he has stayed in so often the Garry Kasparov Suite.

Although I generally dislike press conferences and hope I will get a chance for a more private conversation later, I feel that I can't just stand there and decide to ask a few questions as well.

– *You have achieved everything there was to be achieved in your career. You make a relaxed impression, but still I can imagine that you feel it as some kind of defeat to leave under the circumstances.*

'I recognised my failings and shortcomings some time ago and I think that if I could help others it's only by leaving. So they can concentrate on productive things, not negative. As I just said, I am a man of big goals, but I am also very realistic and if I can't accomplish some-

NEW IN CHESS

After 20 years of unparalleled success, it was perhaps fitting that Kasparov's career should end in Linares.

thing I have no choice but to recognize it. I exhausted my options in reconstituting the world of chess. And I failed. I will not stop promoting the game of chess. I hope that my writings, my lectures, my public appearances will give more recognition to our sport. But it's for others now to make the big change.'

– *How much time did it exactly take you to come to this drastic decision. What was the straw that broke the camel's back?*

'As I said, the reasons added up one by one, but the first moment was the failure of the match in Dubai. I just recognised that I didn't belong to this world any longer. The treatment that the FIDE leadership offered to me during this period was... outstanding (with a wry smile). Then I just contemplated the way of my departure. I was terribly frustrated when I wrote this open letter during Wijk aan Zee (announcing his withdrawal from the world championship – DJtG). You could sense between the lines that I was really upset. I wasn't sure, but then I recognized that it was time to go. But I owed Linares my participation and I wanted to take the trophy. And the problem with the last two games was that I beat Adams in such a nice fashion. After that game I couldn't force myself to play anymore. I stopped, I collapsed. I dreamt about plus five as the best result here, and I stopped the tournament when I didn't want to press Anand as White yesterday. And today probably was the logical outcome. One move before the draw I stopped playing.

'It's very difficult to explain all my feelings during the tournament, because in the second round I knew I played the last game with each opponent. It was not easy, it was very painful. It doesn't happen to you very often, it only happens once. It's like you have a rocket launch, counting nine, eight, seven, six... That's what I did in this tournament, counting the games that remained. I was scared to make a really bad blunder. My mother knows it. Every morning I said, oh my God, maybe today. Today there will be a big bad blunder, maybe today. Every day I expected a blunder, I don't know why. Okay, finally it happened (laughs). And today was probably the first day I didn't expect it. I even lost my determination to be fearful.'

– *Despite this upset in the last round you still win the tournament. How mixed are your feelings about that?*

'Unfortunately for me, they have a very strange system for delivering the trophy. Mentally I wanted the trophy. Not even the trophy itself but the fact that I had the trophy. If they had a different system, maybe my resistance would have been very different today. I already knew that by making a draw with Vishy the tournament was over and I would receive the trophy. So it had a very bad impact on my system, it was shattered completely.'

Kasparov answers a few more questions and then Ljubomir Ljubojevic, who lives in Linares and has often acted as an intermediary between the Kasparovs and the organizers, makes an end to the press conference. Kasparov leaves the stage under prolonged applause and chats a bit more with the people that gather around him. It's amazing how fresh and relaxed he looks after the three intense and exhausting weeks that lie behind him, but when I remark on this, he confesses with three drawn out words, 'I'm so tired.' And then he leaves. On his way back to the hotel lobby he briefly agrees to meet me the next day after the closing ceremony and then turns his attention to his mother. She's crying again and he lovingly puts his arm around her shoulder. In a corner of the lobby Zurab Azmaiparashvili watches them enter. The Georgian FIDE vice-president has come to Linares together with his colleague Georgios Makropoulos to gauge the players' interest in an eight-player world championship tournament. Azmai understands that this is a moment to keep his distance and Kasparov doesn't see him. Whispering words of comfort to his mother, he gently ushers her into the elevator and withdraws to his suite.

It's in his suite that we meet the next day after the closing ceremony, 20 hours after he has informed the world of his retirement. The door stands ajar and he's busy signing various memorabilia for a shy local girl who has been taken to see him by Ljubojevic. There will be further interruptions. The hotel manager, Rentero's son who is also called Luis, comes by to have an immense wine bottle signed and from time to time Kasparov picks up his mobile to check his calls. Some calls can wait, others are answered. Still, every time we pick up the thread, he is immediately focused again on what he wants to say. Much of the rest of his remaining time he intends to fill with writing and speaking and there's no question that he loves both. The only question that he doesn't give a straight reply to is when he is asked to describe his feelings now that he's informed the world that his professional chess career has come to an end. Not overly eager he says after a moment's hesitation: 'I think it's probably better to analyse this later. As Vishy (Anand) asked me at the table this afternoon: "Don't you think that in six months from now you will be sorry, you will feel lost without playing, without analysing." I said, "Ask me in six months." I was very genuine at the press conference yesterday. I am a man of goals, I need a target. I need to feel that I make a difference. And I just don't feel that I make a difference anymore. I could play some more games and I wanted to play. I was pushing my luck against Kasimdzhanov and Adams because I wanted to create something that people would remember. But at the end of the day it's too small.'

– *But then you're talking about making a difference for yourself.*

'It's a very important mental process. For all these years I have known that it's not only about winning the game. It's about the style of winning the game, it's about people enjoying it. It's not Garry Kasparov playing Vishy Anand on the stage of Linares. It's Garry Kasparov playing Vishy Anand in Linares or in Wijk aan Zee for the rest of the world. You have to show that something is happening. And I felt energetic because I knew I was responsible for the game. I don't have the same feelings anymore. The game is changing, I am not getting any younger, the players are one third of my age now. I also feel that I lost my reformist potential. I tried to change things. Maybe I was wrong, but I tried. First I wanted to call it a time-out, but you don't take time-outs.'

– *Some people do...*

'But it's not a time-out. You may call it an indefinite time-out.'

– *You're not even 42...*

'I will be 42 in exactly a month's time. It's not about age, it's about your feeling. Could I play more chess in my life and win more tournaments? Yes. I guess I'm still the best player in the world. Could I beat Anand or Kramnik in a match? I think so. There's no guarantee, but I think I have very good chances of beating all the best players in a match, one on one, or in a tournament. Probably in a tournament my chances are even higher. But there is very little for me to accomplish that would really satisfy me. You may recall that many times I said I had dreams. Did I say that I wanted to beat the next generation? I beat probably more than one. It's not about winning. I played games and matches, I lost to Kramnik, but eventually I'm still ahead of them. So mentally for me I won the battle. Kramnik's generation is not threatening my dominance, it comes from younger players. So I don't think they can say Garry Kasparov lost his potential to change chess. I am still ahead of the generation following me. Did I say that my dream was for my son to see me winning the championship? It happened in Moscow. He saw his daddy winning the tournament and carrying the trophy.'

'There is very little for me to accomplish that would really satisfy me.'

– *That was the Russian championship. That was not what you were talking about.*

'No, but the fact is that if I had carved in stone the agreement that by the end of the year I will play a match no matter who, whatever, quarter final, rapid, blitz, something that would give me the highest satisfaction and make sure that my son could see me winning again, that would be another story.'

– *You'd do anything...*

'But we all know it's not going to happen. They're all dragging their feet, because there was probably too much of Kasparov's presence in the world of chess. Fine. I don't want to fight anymore. As you can see here in this tournament, I am relaxed. I knew I would finish my career here, because it was enough, but I wanted to win. No, not to win, I wanted the trophy. That's why mentally I couldn't play yesterday and the day before yesterday. Because I got the trophy already. It's also very psychological. I may be wrong, but I tend to believe that my first step towards losing to Kramnik was when I agreed to concede the trophy to him here in the year 2000. We shared it and we had to play blitz. Kramnik came to this room saying, (Making a whining sound) "Maybe we shouldn't play blitz", and I said, "OK, I have many, you don't have any" and I gave it to him...'

– *I think there was a second mistake. Before the match against Kramnik I asked you if your friendship would be the same afterwards, no matter what happened, and you said yes. And I said, I don't think so.*

'Yes, because for me it was... not a fighting match. For me it was more a fight of concepts. Now here I wanted the trophy, I didn't care about anything else, just the trophy and to bring it back home. And when I won it, I knew it would be in my place and it would show Garry Kasparov to be the winner of Linares 2005.'

– *What mental switch did you make? I had the idea that in the past years, apart from the health problems you had here last year, you were mainly fighting yourself. There was this inner fight and towards the end of the tournament you were just exhausted. And now you were exuding positive energy.*

'Yes, because I made this decision. I even contemplated for a moment not to come to Linares. It's not a process that happens in one day. Something happens that influences you, something happens in your private life, something happens in chess, something happens in politics, you have more books to write, it all adds up. Of course, they are not equally important factors but they all were adding up. Before the tournament, at the end of January, when Wijk aan Zee was over, I said, ahhh (expressing both disgust and slight despair), so what else is there? It's absolutely clear that they would not let me play anything that gave me the official title. I don't think there's an agreement, but there is a general consensus between the elite and the chess functionaries. So what was there to be done? To play Kasimdzhanov (whispers the name in disbelief)? I could not force myself into preparing for this match. So what am I negotiating for, for playing Kasimdzhanov?'

– *You were willing to do that as an intermediate step...*

'Yes, as an intermediate step. But I recognised that it would be a dead-end. In Moscow I said that Linares had a unique chance. If Kramnik played here. Just replace Vallejo by Kramnik and that's it. That's what FIDE wanted. Add Kramnik instead of Vallejo and you have all the players you want. Who else can you add to the list? It would be like Las Palmas '96, all the best players with the FIDE Champion on the side. I mean, we knew that Kasimdzhanov would be dead last in this contest. But winning this tournament would be a completely different story. And of course Kramnik's decision was very conscious. The man is a very good strategist and he recognised that he would not be number one. Maybe it's not Garry, but he would not be number one and most likely not number two. The way he played in Wijk aan Zee it would be disastrous, he could probably make 50 per cent. By not performing well in such an event he would probably lose 99 per cent of his remaining credibility. That's why after his decision to drop out of Linares, I said, "So what can I expect?" As long as I am there they will find excuses and I am getting sick and tired, and really I have other things to do. There's a lot that is consuming my energy, because I have to excite myself. Whether I write a book about chess, whether I write a book about decision-making processes and chess philosophy, whether I go to a demonstration in Russia shouting down Putin, whether I am doing a lecture to a business community in Interlaken in Switzerland or in Bela Horizonte in Brazil, unless I excite myself I cannot do it. And I could no longer excite myself.'

– *And you need appreciation...*

'Yes exactly. Well it's not appreciation, it's reciprocity...'

– *You want to give but you also want to take.*

'Absolutely. Not to sit and fight and always have these petty revenges.'

– *In their reactions the other players here, while not hiding that you could be a difficult person, expressed their respect and stated that your departure is a big loss for chess.*

'I think this is quite a normal reaction. They used to live in a world where there was Garry Kasparov. All these people learned to play chess when I was there. Vishy Anand was very warm this afternoon, talking about the brilliant game I played with Kortchnoi in 1982 and how they analysed it with the Indian team. Now suddenly... Garry was there, for good or for bad, but he was there. Now, if I am not there it's just a different life. They feel lonely. I told Vishy: "Now you will be a dinosaur, you'll be the oldest player in the tournament." (laughs) I don't know if he liked the news! I was there and they all knew I would be the oldest. I was the bridge between the generations. I played with Magnus Carlsen and I studied with Botvinnik. I spoke to Reshevsky and Najdorf. I actually built a bridge throughout the twentieth century of the game of chess. I knew people, spoke to them and made friends with them, who actually remembered days long past. Kortchnoi also plays with them, but he is not a part of their community. I'm part of this chess Internet computerized modern community, while I am also carrying these old memories, as in fairy tales, you know, Lord of the Rings. You have a big book telling the story about the good old days. For them I was a sort of link, a foundation, an element that was an integral part of their lives. For them even a game with me was different. You played Garry, it could be a special game. Because if I was in good shape I could play really phenomenal chess and for them this was a challenge. As Paco Vallejo told me, who was the first one to come up to me, and I was very pleased and my mother was also happy to hear this. He was very formal and said, "It was an honour to play against you." Then the others said almost all the same, but Paco was the first. Now they have to consider their lives in different arrangements.'

– *You were also a very safe defensive wall. Wherever you played your reputation was at stake first, and only then someone else's.*

'Now with my departure I think that they will unify the title, or at least I hope so. They will have to start to show their true colours, they will have to be serious. I think Kramnik will be isolated eventually. Kramnik has no more legitimacy. His only legitimacy was that he beat Kasparov five years ago. What's his legitimacy now? Kasparov is no longer there. What about Anand, Leko, Topalov?

– *He will say that he has not been beaten in a match by them.*

'Beaten in a match, he drew with Leko in a match. I also saved a match against Karpov, but I was way ahead of him by tournament results and rating. Having the fourth or fifth rating is not going to beef up or boost your credibility in the eyes of others.'

– *You say they have to be serious. Do you think* *they are capable of this, especially in FIDE?*

'This is an interesting test and the next six months we are going to find out. While I was there, it was like a rock. They say the rock is here, we can't see the horizon. Now I'm no longer there. Now they have to come up with something or they will show their total impotence, which means, and I hope for the best of chess, that they will be swept away by public anger.'

– *You say you hope for the best of chess and that there are better chances now. That sounds very magnanimous, but at the same time it would be utterly cynical if it happened. Soon, let's say.*

'I will still be happy if they come up with something that can end this mess. Because the end of the mess is not that they come up with some tournament and play somewhere in Vietnam and decide who is the best for the moment. That will be a matter of luck, because right now Anand or Leko or even Topalov could win the tournament. This element of luck plays a big role. Mickey (Adams) played a very good tournament here. He could have been luckier against Veselin and win both games and then it would be a different ball game. He could definitely make at least half a point against me. That's why one tournament doesn't solve the problem. The problem is how to attract corporate sponsorship and that requires a change in the code of behaviour. It needs a new organisational system. It needs a new approach. It needs FIDE to be changed dramatically, to adjust itself to the modern times. Professional players will have to behave like top professionals, showing corporate solidarity before anything else. It's a joint responsibility, I've been saying it for years. Everybody carries responsibility, small, large, medium, everybody is responsible. Unless this corporate solidarity is established, I don't think chess will be attractive for corporate sponsors. And then a single event doesn't solve the problem.'

– *Let's talk about miracles. One way or another they manage this and a year from now there is a generally accepted World Champion. And he challenges you. Would he get you out of retirement?*

'I don't want to say yes, I don't want to say no. The problem is... I have been in retirement for less than 24 hours (laughs loudly).'

– *Let's not run ahead of things...*

'It will be difficult. Vishy said during dinner: "Garry, you will feel upset and come back." One thing I know, I am not going to stop studying chess. I'm keeping my small team together, we're going to work. I'm going to play on the Internet, I will show up in rapid tournaments. I will play for fun, I will play simultaneous exhibitions. I will still be involved writing books, and writing books means working with the computer, following chess. For me this mental work will not stop, because I think it is important for my mind. No matter what I do, I have to get some energy back from the game of chess. I will be quite active and keeping my powder dry.'

> *'For me, this mental work will not stop.'*

– *You just want to get rid of the negative emotions.*

'Yes, it is time to do other things, where my energy, my strategic vision, my experience, my intellect can be invested with more mutual benefits for everybody.'

– *You said that you decided before the tournament that you were going to retire. Was there a plan B? If I don't win the tournament I will think of something else?*

'No, I just wanted to go somewhere else. I hoped I'd win the tournament. I wasn't sure that I would win, I could only pray that I would. I didn't win two Linareses in a row, that was bad. I didn't have a plan B, I just believed it would happen.'

– *You speak about your challenges. Most of these challenges, such as the book projects, I like a lot. But when you're talking about your political challenges, I think, hmm, that might damage the book project, because someone might pump a bullet into you.*

'(Clearly not liking the suggestion) Thank you, that's a nice prediction.'

– *It's not a prediction, it's reality. You're running a risk by speaking so openly in a country where political murder...*

'I do things that I believe are right.'

– *But can you understand my worries?*

'I understand, but I can't stop doing things because there is a risk of being assassinated, that's what you said. I take certain precautions, I try to be protected, but at the end of the day, I recognize all the dangers. That's why I would like to speed up the book project (laughs briefly). This summer I want to do most of the work. For me the sixth volume is a legacy for the world of chess and then the book that I mentioned yesterday. This one, in terms of promoting chess, could be far more important than *My Great Predecessors*. That will be the first attempt to present the chess playing field as a decision-making process to the general public. To explain why chess is important for the rest of mankind. I feel that the book could be a bestseller and could in fact help us to enhance the image of chess.'

– *When I mentioned the dangers you are running, this was not intended as a glib remark, but as an expression of genuine concern. Something else which always concerns me is art treasures. When you said you were going to quit chess, one of my thoughts was: 'What's going to happen to his laptop?' What's going to happen to all the ideas that are stored in there?*

'You ask me too many questions to which I don't have answers yet and I am not going to invent them. I don't know what's going to happen. I made a decision not to continue to play professional chess. I don't want to stop analysing. What's going to happen with this (points at the laptop sitting on his desk), I may share it with someone.'

– *It's too early to give it to the Library of Congress because you still need it.*

'I don't want to give it to the Library of Congress, definitely not to the Library of Congress.'

– *But you must have given this some thought? How many books are in there?*

'It's not books, it's analysis. It's roughly 10.3 gigabytes of analysis. I can show you. (Pointing at the screen he explains which files make up the total of his stored analysis).'

– *How big do you estimate your own hard-disk to be?*

'I don't know, I'm already scared by what I have here. You look at that, look at the last number, sixteen-thousand-seven-hundred-and-twenty-nine. And those are just analyses made here in Linares (points at other files). We're always updating the database. It's simply too much. I wish I could find some good use for it. But I haven't made a conscious decision. We had a funny discussion at the table. I suggested that I could put it up for auction and Vishy said, "Oh, how much?" I said, "You start." (laughs wholeheartedly) But look, it's not... Ideas are ideas. I'm not trying to squeeze the ideas and hide them behind closed doors.'

– *You see them as starting points for creativity...*

'Exactly. The great pleasure is in invention, in the process of invention. Inventing ideas.'

– *And that's what Anand meant when he said that one day it may start itching.*

'Yes.'

Just months after Kasparov quit, FIDE held its latest 'world championship', which by now had metamorphosed from a knockout to an eight player, double round all-play-all. Anand started as most people's favourite, but in the event, the result was already clear at the halfway mark. Veselin Topalov's blistering start left the field trailing in his wake, and FIDE had another claimant for the world title.

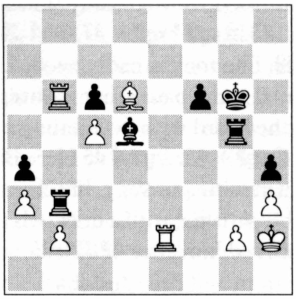
Topalov's Magnificent Seven

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

He arrived in Argentina as one of several hot favourites and the race promised to be tight – but not for long. Seven rounds, and an explosion of historic proportions later, there was only talk of one new champion. In the first half of the FIDE world championship in San Luis, Veselin Topalov smashed the opposition with an unbelievable 6½ out of 7 to take a lead that allowed him to coast home in the second half. The Bulgarian pocketed 30 per cent of the one million dollar prize-fund and gained enough Elo points to boost the status of his title. In the next world ranking Topalov will be in first place, as the third player in history to break the magic 2800 barrier.

In the first row of seats immediately behind the arbiters' table, Governor Alberto Rodriguez Saa intently watches the only game that is still going on. Flanking him are Florencio Campomanes, who displays the solemn mien that befits the occasion, and Argentinian grandmaster Miguel Quinteros, who at times whispers to the Governor what he thinks about the position. The Caja de los Trebejos saw empty days in the early rounds, but now the giant 'Chess Box', which was constructed in a mind-boggling eleven weeks, is almost packed to capacity for the last round but one of the San Luis world championship. And with good reason. If Veselin Topalov doesn't lose his game as Black against Rustam Kasimdzhanov, the Bulgarian will be World Champion with one round to spare. Vishy Anand and Peter Svidler, both trailing by one and a half points, could still have tested Topalov's patience and nerves if they had won today, but the Indian had to settle for a draw despite a ferocious onslaught on Alexander Morozevich's king, while the Russian reached the same result with a Marshall Attack that only brought him a slightly worse ending against Judit Polgar.

Topalov's game is a tense affair. With the title in sight he has opted for the Berlin Defence. During the first few hours Kasimdzhanov had been exerting some annoying pressure and now he's won a pawn, but it's not a big pawn with opposite-coloured bishops on the board. Moreover, Topalov has created counterplay with a deft rook manoeuvre. And this rook takes on an even more prominent part after White's 34th move.



Kasimdzhanov-Topalov
position after 34.♔h2

Veselin Topalov takes the applause, after dominating San Luis.

34...♖e3! A first indication for the audience that Topalov is going for the initiative. **35.♖d2 ♖eg3!** And here's another one, a move that no computer indicates, as Topalov's manager Silvio Danailov proudly observed later. The tension and the silence in the hall are almost palpable now, particularly when it is rent by a mobile phone that starts ringing. As if stung by a bee, arbiters and organizers sit up and start looking around for the culprit, while Topalov stoically puts his fingers in his ears. **36.♗xg3 hxg3+ 37.♔h1 ♖f5 38.♖d1 ♖f2 39.♖b8** The rook is badly needed in the defence against the f-pawn that is threatening to roll down the board with devastating effect. **39...f5 40.♖d8 ♗xg2+ 41.♔g1 ♗d5** Here Black could play for a win with 41...♔g5, but Topalov is understandably satisfied with a draw, which Kasimdzhanov offered him after **42.♖1xd5**.

Within seconds the playing area is flooded with people, like a boxing ring after a bout, and amid endless flashlights and applause Topalov is embraced and congratulated by Alberto Rodriguez Saa, the man who brought the FIDE world championship to San Luis. For the moment, the event has been everything the governor could have hoped for, but only time will tell whether all the effort and money have been worth it. Apart from the prize-money (one million dollars), it is said that at least a further ten million dollars have been invested in the construction of the 'Chess Box', the refurbishing of the Potrero de los Funes hotel and in general improvements to the province's infrastructure. These are huge amounts in a country that is still recovering from the deep economic crisis of 2001, but the governor is optimistic that the investments will pay off. The 'Chess Box' can be used as a conference centre and the province's information highway will attract the music and film industry. The chess players remain welcome as well, as he announced that San Luis will bid for the 2010 Olympiad. To accommodate all the players they intend to build an Olympic village. Ambitious plans, for sure, but at 800 kilometres west of Buenos Aires, San Luis is not exactly round the corner.

Three days later, at the closing ceremony, Veselin Topalov speaks in the name of all the players when he thanks the organizers for their warm hospitality. And it's true that they had gone out of their way to make the eight contestants and their partners and seconds feel at home. For instance, each player was offered a mobile phone (first three hours worldwide for free), a laptop with a fast connection and a car with a driver. Journalists, too, had nothing to complain about once they reached Potrero de los Funes: dozens of computers in the pressroom, wireless LAN everywhere and lots of friendly and helpful staff. But you first had to get there! Contacting the organizers beforehand was virtually impossible and the championship's official travel agency, based in Buenos Aires, seemed to have the same problem. As a result, many guests found it impossible to book a room in the players' hotel and had to stay in San Luis, a 20-minute taxi ride from the venue. For many weeks I also found it impossible to make any headway in my attempts to book a room, until I struck lucky. In an attempt to reach the chief organizer directly at his workplace, I happened to get a young man on the phone who had absolutely nothing to do with the organization, but who was kind enough to go to the hotel and arrange the booking.

Topalov's improvised speech was the high point of the closing ceremony. Slightly nervous, but in fluent Spanish he struck all the right notes by thanking really everyone (even including the journalists), accepted the chair he was offered at the university of San Luis and joked that he might take part in the next elections for governor of the province. The laughter and applause he drew with this last remark were further evidence of how happy everyone was with the new champion. It was, after all, his incredible fighting spirit that had made the championship such a success. Or rather the unbridgeable lead he had taken so early on. It's hard to imagine that this eight-player format would have been received so well if the title had been decided in a five-minute tie-breaker. Also, to avoid any misunderstanding, I need to add that the other participants didn't pull their punches either and showed great combativity. There were hardly any Petroffs (and three out of five of these were decided!) and in three rounds all games ended in a decision. Perhaps the immense popularity of 1.e4 (which resulted in 25 Sicilians) played a crucial role. Out of 56 games no fewer than 50(!) started with 1.e4, if we include Morozevich's 1.♘c3 against Polgar, which quickly transposed to a Najdorf.

Still, the immense impact of Topalov's 6½ out 7 cannot be denied, if only for the fact that almost everyone felt the championship was already decided when, halfway through, he already was two points ahead of his closest pursuer, Svidler, while two other pre-tournament favourites, Anand and Leko, were trailing by three points. Obviously, this was a bitter pill for the other players, if only because they were soon asked more questions at the daily press conferences about Topalov's play than about their own games. Leko even expressed his annoyance at the fact that Topalov was playing all his games at the same table, a result of the number he had drawn at the opening ceremony. Perhaps he felt that Topalov was sitting at 'his' table waiting for the others to come and do their exam, and he considered lodging a protest. When he heard that this would cost him 500 dollars if the protest was rejected, Leko abandoned the idea.

For Topalov the big lead was a luxurious cushion that allowed him to strike a more defensive attitude in the second leg. The seven draws that he added to his total were more than sufficient, but the bare figures are deceptive. Apart from two short draws against Leko and Polgar, they were certainly not bloodless draws. He missed an excellent chance to improve his score in his second game against Morozevich, when he spoiled a completely winning position, and he had to be on the alert in the other games. Essentially, the last critical moment was his game from Round 9 against Anand. Even if he had lost, Topalov would have maintained a comfortable lead, but with five more rounds to go his nerves might have started to play tricks on him.

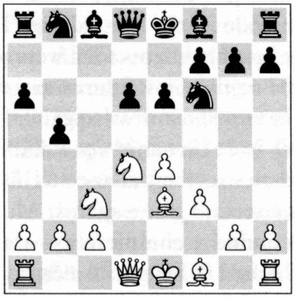
NOTES BY

Garry Kasparov

SI 19.16 – B80
Peter Leko
Veselin Topalov
San Luis 2005 (1)

All too soon here I am annotating the games of other players in the pages of New In Chess. I think I've started to get the hang of it after five volumes of *My Great Predecessors*, but it still feels odd to comment on the games of players who were my opponents for so many years. It is somewhat surprising that this key battle was not selected for annotation by one of the players. I suppose Leko had painful memories and Topalov had nothing to be proud of. It made my choice quite easy because this was not only the first round but it went a long way toward deciding the fate of both players. The game could have had a very different ending and then it could have been a very different tournament. Nothing happens by accident. To make some guesses about the psychology of these two players I would say this game reflected the way they approached San Luis in general. When Leko plays Topalov in the first round – in the middle of the tournament there could be some changes – you can't expect anything but 1.e4 from Leko or anything other than the Najdorf from Topalov. So let us skip most of the opening moves, although we can pause at move 8, the first crossroads.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f3 e6 7.♗e3 b5



8.♕d2

In every critical position with ♗e3 and f3 there comes the question whether to play g4 first or ♕d2. The conventional wisdom shifts from one to the other. For a while 8.g4 was considered the best and then Topalov, in his sensational 20-move win against Kramnik at Corus 2005, found a new idea after 8.g4 h6 9.♕d2. Topalov continued 9...b4 10.♘a4 ♘bd7 11.0-0-0 ♘e5, demonstrating the weakness created by g4. Since then there have been many more games in this line and of course Topalov's games were instrumental. He played a phenomenal game with Anand, another first rounder, in Sofia, eventually drawn. And if we consider the Kramnik game was in the second round in Wijk aan Zee we could say that the Najdorf has served Topalov quite well. His success in this game wasn't exactly predetermined, but it rewarded his consistent hard work on improving his Najdorf.

8.♕d2 was considered an inaccuracy not too long ago because after 8...♘bd7 9.g4 ♘b6 White can't prevent Black from reaching his optimal set-up. One knight on b6, another on d7, then ♗b7, ♖c8. I had some experience with the black side of that position myself with mixed results. Sometimes a win, sometimes a draw! Anand tried to cast doubts on this set-up with 10.a4 after 9...♘b6 and after 10...♘c4 11.♗xc4 bxc4 he castled short and I won a blitz game, in Reykjavik. Later Anand found that White should play a5 and then ♘a4 and positionally it's quite unpleasant for Black, which I could feel in the first round of Linares this year against Leko. So Leko also had experience in this line, also early on in events, but not with the same positive results as Topalov. We'll have to see whether or not it was Leko's failure in this game that was predetermined.

So, 8.♕d2 is considered the most subtle way, but I'm sure soon enough we'll hear that only the energetic 8.g4 is the right way; that's the way modern chess develops.

8...b4

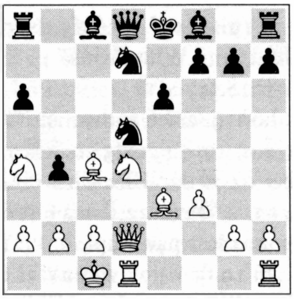
Topalov played ...b4 anyhow, and we have to remind uninformed readers – if there are such of New In Chess – that Topalov executed this move against Kramnik in the last round of Sofia. That was also a game full of blunders that ended up with a Topalov victory. It's the same idea: Black wants to push away the knight and then play ♘bd7.

9.♘a4

Kramnik played 9.♘ce2 which is less convincing, and after 9...e5 10.♘b3 ♘c6 Topalov got a very comfortable game. 9.♘a4 is a more principled move.

9...♘bd7 Things aren't the same as the Kramnik game because after **10.0-0-0** 10...♘e5 doesn't work because the pawn on f3 hasn't been weakened. But because White didn't play g4 and Black didn't weaken his kingside with ...h6 he can play **10...d5** now, hoping that he can hold the position in the centre and that his king can castle. If White doesn't achieve something immediately, Black will enjoy a solid position with a knight on d5, the other to f6, maybe ♗b7 or d7 and castles. It's all very nice in theory, but Black is very far behind in development. It reminds me of my games against Nigel Short in our London match in 1993, Game 8 in particular, when we played the Sozin with ♗c4 against the Najdorf. I remember Nigel's comments after the game after I said his attack couldn't work. He said: 'I learned that when you have a big lead in development it must have some value and you must sacrifice something!' And that's what he did, and quite successfully in fact. But it is very important to remember that if you're ahead in development it's not forever. You must attack, you must be ready to sacrifice, and Leko often isn't willing. Very often in his Sicilian games he tries to be very precise, to slowly prepare the attack, and that doesn't always work. His record in these very sharp Sicilians when things go blow for blow is not very impressive. That's part of the psychological reasoning that caused him trouble in this game and eventually in the tournament. But so far it was quite easy here.

11.exd5 ♘xd5 12.♗c4



12...♘7f6

I wonder how much time Topalov spent working on this position, because the dangers are quite evident. The alternative was 12...♗b7. Many of these lines continue up to forced wins for White, but in these positions you have to take them for granted. For example: 13.♖he1:

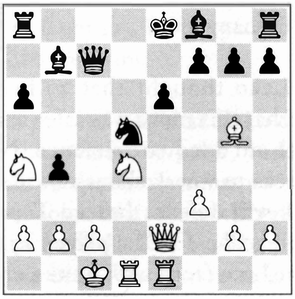
A) If 13...♕c7 14.♘xe6! ♕xc4 (14...fxe6? 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗f4 and wins) 15.♘c7+ ♕xc7 16.♗f4+ ♔d8 17.♗xc7+ ♔xc7 18.c4 bxc3 19.♘xc3 with a white advantage;

B) 13...♗e7 14.♘f5! 0-0 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗b6! ♘xb6 17.♘xe7+ ♔h8! 18.♘xb6 ♕xb6 19.♘xd5 exd5 20.♕xd5 ♕h6+ 21.♕d2 ♕xh2 22.♖h1 ♕g3 (if 22...♕b8 23.♖h4 a5? 24.♖dh1 and wins) 23.♕xb4 ♕xg2 24.♕h4 ♕g6 25.♖dg1 ♕h6+ 26.♕xh6 gxh6 27.♖xh6 and White is winning.

13.♗g5 ♕c7 14.♗xd5 ♘xd5 15.♖he1

There are many threats, including ♘xe6 and ♘f5, but we have to remember that even with all these threats and the white army massed in the centre, strategically White might be lost very quickly. Black has the two bishops and the ♘a4 is a terrible piece unless it can make it to b6 or c5, while the black knight on d5 is strong. So White has to win urgently, preferably in the next five moves! This is typical of a classical Sicilian and that's what Leko has not been very good at doing. He would prefer a clear plus, to win in 50 moves instead of 20. We can imagine Shirov or even Anand with this position; they would be looking for the crushing move.

15...♗b7 16.♕e2



White has done everything right so far, beyond criticism. Now 17.♘xe6 is a threat and Topalov played an obvious move, which is probably a decisive mistake. Now with a computer we can say not probably, 16...♕d6 *is* a decisive mistake. The best chance for Black was 16...♘f4, which was difficult to even consider.

16...♕d6?

So he should have played 16...♘f4!, when:

A) 17.♕e3 is probably the best move for White: 17...♘xg2 18.♘xe6 ♕xc2+ 19.♔xc2 ♘xe3+ 20.♖xe3 fxe6 21.♘b6 ♖b8 22.♗f4 ♗c5 (if Black tries to keep the material balance with 22...♗e4+ 23.♖xe4 ♖xb6 24.♖c4 ♔f7 25.♖c8 is highly unpleasant) 23.♖ed3 ♗xb6 24.♗xb8 ♗d5 25.♗d6 a5 26.a3. White is better but probably Black may hold because of the two bishops. So it seems that Black couldn't equalize after the suspicious opening but was not quite losing. When you play such lines you have to stay on the lookout for exceptions. 16...♘f4 is not a move you want to make, but you have to find ways to defend your position unconventionally;

B) Less convincing is 17.♕f2 h6 18.♕h4 ♘g6 19.♘xe6 fxe6 20.♕g4 ♗c8 (and not 20...hxg5? 21.♕xe6+ ♗e7 22.♕xg6+ ♔f8 23.♕f5+ ♗f6 24.♖d7) 21.♖xe6+ ♗xe6 22.♕xe6+ ♘e7 23.♗xe7 ♗xe7 24.♘b6 ♖d8 25.♕g6+ ♔f8 26.♕f5+ ♗f6 27.♘d7+ with a draw;

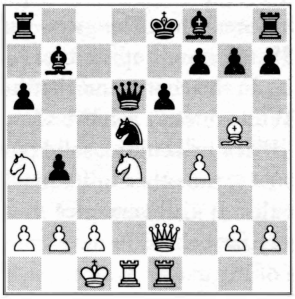
C) The same goes for 17.♗xf4 ♕xf4+ 18.♔b1 ♗e7 19.♘xe6 fxe6 20.♕xe6 ♕c7 and now 21.♘c5 and 21.♘b6 don't make big progress because of 21...♖d8 and Black can hold. An extra piece is an extra piece and White's attacking resources are soon exhausted. He nets a few pawns, but nothing decisive. It's also important to pay attention to the very strong pawn on b4. It prevents White from making a comfortable *luft* for his king. Maybe 8...b4 was not the best move but it's an annoying pawn in many lines.

17.♔b1?

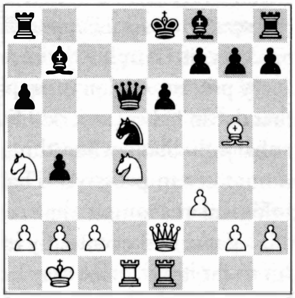
Perhaps Leko thought that 17.f4 was winning, but that this move was safer and still left Black with no adequate defence. Now there aren't checks to worry about and it's not clear how Black will defend. Indeed Topalov plays 17...h6, a mistake. Had he played 17...g6 Leko would have been faced with quite a challenge.

17.♘c5? didn't promise White much either: 17...♕xc5 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♕xe6+ ♗e7 20.♗xe7 ♕xe7 21.♕d6 ♘e3 22.♕f4 g5! (22...♖f8? loses to 23.♕xe3 ♕xe3+ 24.♖xe3+ ♔f7 25.♖d7+) 23.♕d4 0-0 24.♖xe3 and Black is better.

But indeed the correct move was 17.f4!. With this Leko could have changed the course of the game and probably the entire tournament because it was really the only game in which Topalov was facing the real threat of defeat. It's even hard to say what Black can do here. The f-pawn joins the attack and White has all the pieces playing, even the knight on a4 is waiting to jump into c5:



17...g6 (17...h6? loses to 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♕h5+ ♔d7 20.♕f7+ ♔c8 21.♖xe6 ♕d7 22.♗e7! ♗xe7 23.♖xd5 ♗xd5 24.♘b6+ ♔c7 25.♘xd7; and 17...♗e7? is no good because of 18.♘f5 exf5 19.♗xe7 ♕xe7 20.♖xd5 ♕xe2 21.♖xe2+ ♔f8 22.♖xf5 and wins) 18.f5 ♗g7 19.♘c5! ♕xc5 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♕xe6+ ♔f8 22.fxg6 and White wins.



17...h6?

Also bad is 17...♗e7? 18.♘f5 exf5 19.♗xe7 ♕xe7 20.♕d3 and White wins.

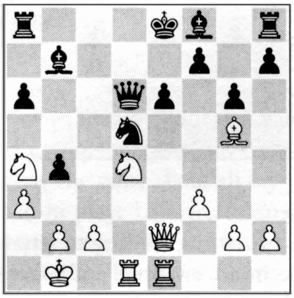
Or 17...♖c8? 18.f4:

A) 18...h6? 19.♘xe6 and wins;

B) 18...♗e7 19.♘f5 exf5 20.♗xe7 ♕xe7 21.♖xd5 (after 21.♕d2? Black has 21...♘e3 22.♖xe3 ♗e4) 21...♕xe2 22.♖xe2+ ♔f8 23.♖xf5 and White is a clear pawn up;

C) 18...g6 19.f5 ♗g7! (19...gxf5? fails to 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♕h5+ ♔d7 22.♕f7+ ♗e7 23.♘b6+ and wins) 20.fxe6 0-0 21.exf7+ ♖xf7 22.♘e6 and White is better.

The best and likely the only attempt at defence is 17...g6!. Now neither 18.♘c5 nor 18.♘xe6 work (18.♘c5?! ♕xc5 19.♘xe6 fxe6 20.♕xe6+ ♗e7 21.♗xe7 ♕xe7 22.♕d6 ♘e3 23.♕f4 g5! 24.♕d4 0-0 25.♖xe3 ♕f6 26.♕xb4 ♖ad8 and Black is better; 18.♘xe6?! fxe6 19.♗f6 ♖g8 20.♘c5 ♗c8 21.♘e4 ♕c6 22.♖xd5 ♕xd5 23.♖d1 ♕c6 and Black has the upper hand). White would have to find an amazing move to seek an advantage: 18.a3!!.



An inhuman move, although computers don't seem to be attracted to it either. Remember the role of the pawn on b4. It's not just good for the endgame, but it's also important to protect the black stronghold on d5. If the pawn is gone then c4 and with the elimination of the d5 knight the black position collapses like a house of cards. 18.a3 reminds me of my 1985 Game 24 with Karpov with ♖e7, a very strange manoeuvre then that has become a standard concept. Perhaps we will see a3 against b4 in the future?

A) Bad is 18...bxa3? 19.c4 ♗e7 (19...h6 20.c5 ♕d7 21.♘b6 ♘xb6 22.♘xe6 ♕xe6 23.♕d3 and wins; 19...♗g7 (the best chance) 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 22.♖xe6+ ♔f7 23.cxd5 ♖hb8 24.♖e7+ ♔f8 25.♖c7 ♗c8 26.♗e7+ ♔g8 27.♗xa3 and White is winning) 20.♗xe7 ♘xe7 21.♘f5 (this leads to an easy win) 21...♕b4 22.♘d6+ ♔f8 23.♕e5 ♖g8 24.♘c5 ♗c8 25.b3;

B) 18...h6 19.♘c5! ♕b6 (19...hxg5 20.♘xb7 ♕b6 21.♕e5 bxa3 22.♘xe6 fxe6 23.♖xd5 ♕xb2+ 24.♕xb2 axb2 25.h3±) 20.♘cxe6 fxe6 21.♕d3 ♔d7 22.♖xe6 ♗d6 23.♗e3 bxa3 (23...♘xe3 24.♘b5 ♘f5 25.♘xd6 ♔xe6 26.♕b3+ ♔f6 27.♕f7+ ♔g5 28.f4+ ♔h5 29.g4+±) 24.♘b3 ♕c7 25.♖xg6±;

C) 18...♗g7 19.axb4 0-0 20.♘c5 ♖ab8 21.c4 (21.c3) 21...♘xb4 22.♘dxe6 ♕c6 23.♗e7 (the simplest, with a clear plus in the endgame) 23...fxe6 24.♗xf8 ♗xf8 25.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 26.♘xe6.

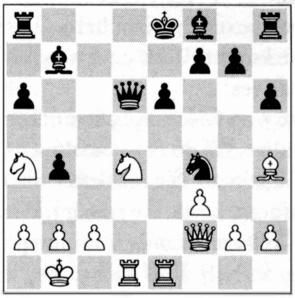
18.♗h4

Black has achieved very little because the bishop is still on the diagonal and now there is a critical weakness on g6, as can be seen if Black now tries 18...♖c8.

18...♘f4

Here 18...g6? is not good: 19.♘c5! ♕xc5 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♕xe6+ ♗e7 22.♗xe7 ♘xe7 23.♕xg6+ ♔f8 24.♕f6+ and wins. If 18...♖c8? there is 19.♕d3 with the threat ♘xe6 and ♕g6+: 19...♗e7 (19...♘f4 loses to 20.♕f5 ♗d5 21.♗g3 g5 22.♗xf4 gxf4 23.♘xe6) 20.♘f5 ♕c6 21.♘xe7 ♘xe7 22.♘b6 with an overwhelming position for White.

19.♕f2



19...♕c7

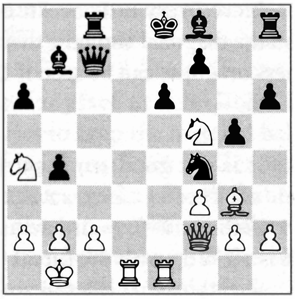
Here 19...♘d5 was offered as the best defence in some publications, but after 20.♗g3 ♕d8 21.♕e2 Black is helpless. The calamity on e6 is inevitable: 21...♕f6 22.♘b5! ♗c6 (if 22...♖d8 23.♖xd5 ♗xd5 24.♘c7+ ♔e7 25.♘xd5+ ♖xd5 26.♘b6 ♖d8 27.♕c4 decides) 23.♖xd5 axb5 24.♘b6 ♖a6 25.♖xb5 (25.♘d7) 25...♕d8 26.♘d5 ♗xd5 27.♖b8 and wins.

20.♘f5?

It has been pointed out that Leko could have won with the natural 20.♘b6!. Indeed it was time to wake up the last sleeping piece: 20...♖b8 (20...♕xb6? loses to 21.♘xe6 ♕xe6 22.♕b6) 21.♘f5 ♗c6 22.♕d4 ♖g8 23.♘c4 g5 24.♗g3. The ♘a4 has been relocated to c4 and as Yury Dokhoian likes to say in such positions, 'Without the rook on e1 the game would be roughly equal.'

20...g5 21.♗g3 The previous move, 20.♘f5, was also natural but it gives Black a chance to consolidate with: **21...♖c8**

And now it's not simple. The pawn on c2 is under threat. The best now for White is still 22.♘b6, but we're talking about a slight advantage at best.

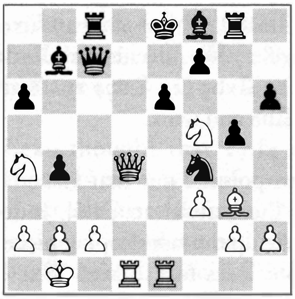


22.♕d4?!

Both 22.♘b6 with a better endgame or 22.h4 ♖g8 23.h5 keeping Black under pressure offer better chances. We have to recognize that Black has a defensive mechanism here, ♖g8-♖g6-♖f6 kicking the knight. Let's have a look at the various alternatives:

22.c3?! bxc3 23.♘xc3 ♗c5 is unclear; 22.♘b6 ♗c5 23.♘d6+ ♕xd6 (23...♗xd6 24.♘xc8 ♗c5 25.♘d6+ ♗xd6 26.♕d4 is better for White) 24.♖xd6 ♗xf2 25.♗xf2 ♖c7 26.g3 ♘g6 27.♘d5 ♗xd5 28.♖xd5 with only a minimal advantage for White; 22.h4!? ♖g8 23.h5 ♗e7 and White keeps some pressure; 22.♔a1 ♖g8! (22...♕xc2? loses to 23.♕d4; and 22...♖d8? 23.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 24.♘c5 ♗c8 25.♘e4 is clearly better for White) 23.c4 ♖g6 24.c5 ♖d8 with a complicated position.

22...♖g8

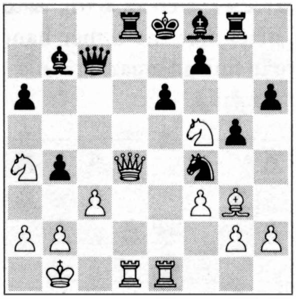


23.c3??

A decisive mistake, but White already had to be very careful. 23.♕f2 was recommended but after 23...♖g6 he's two tempi down and Black has avoided the worst.

Another possibility was 23.c4. This line is worth following up for the flashy perpetual check draw at the end: 23...♖d8 24.♕e3 ♗c6 25.♘b6 ♖xd1+ 26.♖xd1 ♗c5 27.♕xc5 ♗e4+ 28.fxe4 ♕xc5 29.♘d7 ♕c7 30.♘f6+. Amazing. And there is 23.♘e3 ♖d8, which doesn't pose Black any problems either.

23...♖d8 White is already in serious trouble.



24.♕xd8+

Virtual capitulation, leading to a terrible endgame. Queens are swapped and most of Black's disadvantages turn into advantages.

A better practical option was 24.♕e3 giving Black a few chances to go wrong:

A) 24...♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♕a5 26.♕a7 ♕xf5+ 27.♔a1 ♗d5 28.♘b6 ♗e7 29.♗xf4 (29.♘c8 ♔f8 30.♕xe7+ ♔g7 is unclear) 29...♕xf4 (29...gxf4? 30.♕d7+ ♔f8 31.♘xd5 favours White) 30.♘xd5 exd5 31.♖e1 ♕d6 32.♕a8+ ♕d8 33.♕c6+ is a draw;

B) 24...♗c6 25.♘b6 bxc3 with a big advantage for Black.

24...♕xd8 25.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 26.♘e3 26.♖d1+ ♔c7 27.♘d4 e5 doesn't solve White's problems either. **26...♗c6 27.♘b6 bxc3 28.bxc3 ♗g7 29.♗xf4 gxf4 30.♘d1 ♗b5 31.a4 ♗d3+ 32.♔c1 ♔c7 33.a5 ♗h8 34.♔d2 ♗b5 35.♖g1 ♗c6 36.♔e2 ♗e5 37.c4** Or 37.♘c4 ♗b5 and wins. **37...♗d4 38.♘f2 ♗c3 39.♘e4 ♗xa5 40.c5 f5**

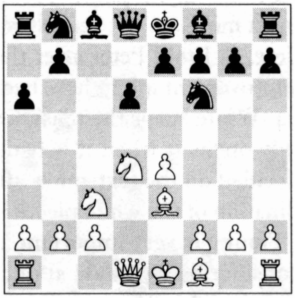
White resigned. A very tense game, full of content, but the real fight was within a span of just six or seven moves. In those 13 ply there were five mistakes, two by Black and three by White. Most importantly, Leko made the last one. That's the Najdorf, and Topalov was the deserving winner. I'm sure Leko had a different opinion and judging from the rest of his tournament he had trouble sleeping well after this loss. I won't be too critical because we can't ignore that this was played in the first round of the most important event of the year. You are always under special pressure in the first round and having such a heavyweight match-up so early is hard on the nerves. And in the Najdorf you know one mistake could have a dramatic effect on the whole tournament, which is exactly what happened.

NOTES BY
Veselin Topalov

SI 14.7 – B90
Peter Svidler
Veselin Topalov
San Luis 2005 (5)

Peter will probably say about this game that he played badly, which is true. But then my opponents may say the same about all my wins. Judit may say that she played this terrible move g4, Peter (Leko) may say that he was better, and so on. Still, independently of the result, this was quite an interesting game from a chess point of view.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3



6...♘g4

In recent games I have been playing 6...e6 here, but two days before this game Judit had shown part of her preparation in the very sharp line with 7.g4 against Kasimdzhanov, which is very messy. Besides, it's hard to remember all the lines. Before my game against Peter we saw that he doesn't have much experience as White against 6...♘g4. We also had an interesting idea in mind in a very critical line and decided to surprise him. An important point is that if White wants to avoid 6...♘g4, he has to play 6.f3, but then you cannot play 6...e6 7.g4.

7.♗g5

Some players go back – 7.♗c1 – and after Black has gone back as well – 7...♘f6 – they play 8.f3. But apparently this is what Peter chose not to do.

7...h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗g3 ♗g7 10.h3

This is what has been considered the critical line recently.

10...♘e5 The alternative is 10...♘f6. **11.♘f5**

This became popular after Shirov beat Polgar with it. It leads to a fascinating position, which I think is hard to grasp for a computer. You can check lines with it, but the idea of playing the knight to f5 and later manoeuvres like ♘d5-e3, followed by c3, can only be found by humans. The other move is 11.f3, which Peter tried two rounds later against Polgar. I think I was the first person to use this move, and it has also been played many times.

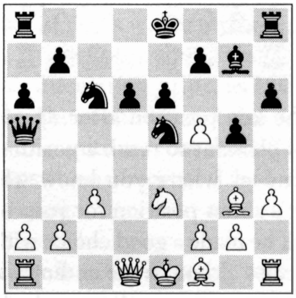
11...♗xf5 12.exf5 ♘bc6 13.♘d5 e6 14.♘e3

This is slightly inaccurate. More precise is first taking on e6: 14.fxe6 fxe6 15.♘e3, because now Black cannot play 15...♕b6 in view of 16.♕xd6.

14...♕a5+

Here 14...♕b6 is also possible, as was played by Sutovsky, who after 15.fxe6 ♕b4+ won a game against Andrey Sokolov in the 2004 Greek team championship. I was thinking about 14...♕b6 during the game and wondering if in the meantime more games had been played with it, but in the end I decided to stick with what we had prepared.

15.c3



15...♘f3+

This is the move. It's not a new move but we expected that it would come to Peter as a surprise. It occurred in a couple of games of Cheparinov played in Spanish Opens that were not included in the main databases. It's a spectacular move. We checked it and came to the conclusion that Black is not better. But it was a fresh idea, so why not give it a try?

16.♕xf3

The correct move. If White takes with the pawn, 16.gxf3, then after 16...♗xc3+ 17.bxc3

♕xc3+ there are two options. Either to sacrifice the queen with 18.♔e2 ♘d4+ 19.♕xd4 ♕xd4, or to give up the rook with 18.♕d2 ♕xa1+ 19.♘d1. In both cases the position is very unclear, but it seems to me that Black is OK. One thing you may notice is that in these lines the pawn on f5 is hanging.

16...♗xc3+ 17.♔d1

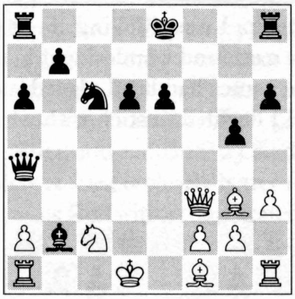
Of course. After 17.bxc3? ♕xc3+ I take the rook with check and win immediately.

17...♕a4+

An important check that forces the white knight to a bad square. In many lines, after having taken the exchange, there is the motif that I can take on c2 with my queen, followed by ...♘d4+, which leads to a good endgame for Black.

In our analysis we also looked at 17...♗xb2, but this is less good.

18.♘c2 ♗xb2 19.fxe6 He's lucky that he can still take. **19...fxe6**



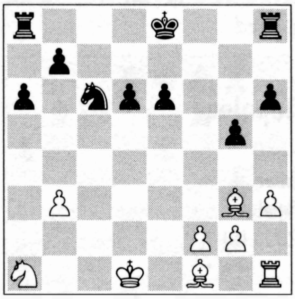
This is the key position after 15...♘f3+. Of course it's pleasant to reach a position after almost 20 moves where you know what to do, whereas it's a new position for your opponent. But I think he made a good choice with his next move, because although the ending may not be better for White, it's certainly not bad for him.

20.♕b3

After 20.♖b1 ♕xa2 21.♖xb2 ♕xb2 Black is certainly OK. I have a rook and three pawns for two pieces, and although White's two bishops are very good, his king may sometimes be in danger.

20...♕xb3 21.axb3 ♗xa1 22.♘xa1

In this endgame I have two pawns and a rook for two bishops, and White doesn't have many pawns left. This is not a standard position, but certainly a complicated one. I don't know how computers would evaluate it, but I think Black should be fine, even though the white pieces co-ordinate very well.



22...♔e7

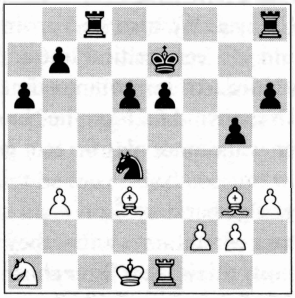
This seems to me the right decision. I have to defend the pawn, but I don't want to weaken the d5-square with 22...e5, when the white knight will soon hop to that square via c2 and e3. I would temporarily close out the bishop on g3 but at the cost of new weaknesses. Castling queenside is also weaker. I want to keep my rooks connected and play my rook on a8 to c8 on the next move.

23.♗d3 Here, as I told Peter after the game, a possible improvement might have been 23.♘c2 ♖ac8 24.h4. White keeps the tension on the h-file and only opens it when it is beneficial for him. He decided on the text-move after which the co-ordination of the white pieces looks fine.

23...♖ac8 Timing is very important in chess. I was also considering 23...♘d4 at once, but after 24.f3, followed by ♗f2, he will immediately start chasing my knight.

24.♖e1 The inconvenient side of 23.♗d3 is that now the knight remains on a1. If he plays 24.♘c2 now, I can immediately create counterplay with 24...♘a5 25.b4 ♘c4 (with the threat 26...♘b2+). And 24.♖e1 gave me time for:

24...♘d4



Here the knight is nicely centralized and I am already getting some counterplay on the c-file.

25.f3

With the clear intention of playing ♗f2. But now I have an important tempo.

25...♖c3 26.♔d2 ♖hc8 27.♖b1

The normal move. White could win the exchange with 27.♗c4, but after 27...♖8xc4 28. bxc4 ♖xc4 I have three pawns for the piece, which is enough. But even stronger would be 28...♖a3, when it is impossible for White to defend against all the threats, like ...♖a2+ followed by ...♖xg2, and the white position collapses.

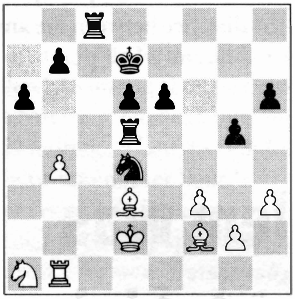
27...♖3c5

Now I had to do something against the threats of ♗c4 and ♗f2.

28.b4 28.♗f2 ♖d5 29.b4 is just a transposition of moves. **28...♖d5 29.♗f2 ♔d7**

This I played so that in some lines when White plays h4, I take the pawn and it's not check.

I also considered the manoeuvre 29...♘c6 30.♔e2 ♘e5 31.♗e4 ♖b5, when White could continue with h4.



30.♗e3

There is nothing wrong with this waiting move, but it kind of surprised me.

I had expected 30.♗xd4 ♖xd4 31.♘c2, when I could try to repeat moves, but when I could also try to win with 31...♖f4. I have two pawns for the piece and I can play ...d5 and ...♔d6, but the position is probably about equal thanks to White's co-ordination. Particularly his knight and bishop work well together. And he is lucky to have one rook. If I managed to exchange one set of rooks in this endgame, my chances would increase.

30...♘f5

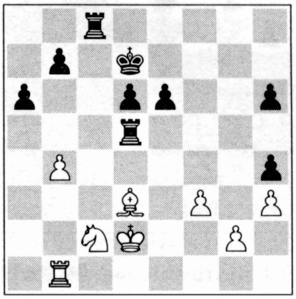
Here I again seriously considered 30...♘c6 31.♔e2 ♘e5 32.♗e4 ♖b5 and if now 33.♘c2 I could continue 33...a5.

31.♗f2

I think that objectively the position is equal and that the right move here would be to repeat moves with 31...♘d4. The move I played forces him to give up one of his bishops, and the open g-file also looks attractive for Black. But I also create a weakness and a mistake further on in the game could have cost me dearly.

31...♘h4 32.♗xh4 gxh4 33.♘c2

White's pieces keep coordinating well, and it's easy for him to defend the g2 pawn.



33...h5?!

A dubious move. Correct was 33...♖g8, and after 34.♘e3 I play 34...♖d4. Now I could play ...h5, and the rook could later go to f4, but still I don't believe that Black can win this. I may advance my pawns to d5 and e5 and move my king to d6, but that's where my progress would end. Here Svidler took a long think, and I was sure he was calculating 34.b5, as I had realized my mistake. But around here I also noticed that he was getting quite nervous. I don't know why, but perhaps it was because I had decided to keep on playing.

34.♖e1

In itself there is nothing wrong with this move (he wants to attack the pawn on h4 via e4), but there was a good alternative.

Here White could have played 34.b5, with the point that after 34...a5 (I would have had to resign myself to 34...axb5 35.♘e3, when Svidler believed afterwards that Black should be holding. But this was certainly not a position I had been aiming for) 35.♖a1 b6 36.♖a4 the pawn on h4 falls.

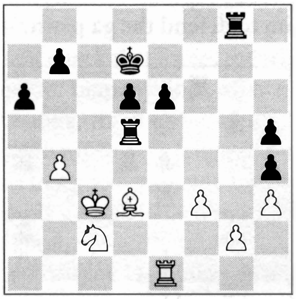
34...♖g8

In reply to his threat I force him to defend the g-pawn. And here he made a big mistake:

35.♔c3?

I cannot take the pawn on g2, of course, because of 36.♘e3, but 35.♘e3 ♖d4 36.♔c3 ♖f4 37.♖e2 would have been more practical, when there is nothing wrong with the white position. For instance 37...d5 38.♔b3.

The simple 35.♖e2 was also good, of course. It looks as if 35.♔c3 is a very accurate move that doesn't allow the black rook to go to d4, but it allows me to break White's pawn structure.



35...a5! With the threat ...a4. **36.♗c4?**

This looks like a strong move, but it is a blunder that loses immediately after Black's reply. He should have played either 36.bxa5 or 36.♖e2.

If White takes – 36.bxa5 – I can capture on g2, 36...♖xg2, as after 37.♘e3 there is 37...♖c5+. If he defends the pawn on g2 – 36.♖e2 – I play 36...♖c8+ 37.♔d2 a4, and Black has made big progress. Obviously, after 36.♘c3 White loses a pawn to 36...axb4+. **36...♖c8** After this move the game is essentially over. **37.♘e3** What he had missed, as he told me after the game, was that 37.♔b3 loses a piece after 37...a4+. **37...♖b5** The most practical move (threatening ...d5), but 37...b5 was also winning. **38.♔d3 ♖xb4 39.♗xe6+** He played these moves in his time-trouble to reach move 40. **39...♔xe6 40.♘c2+ ♔d5 41.♘xb4+ axb4 42.♖e7 b5 43.♖h7 ♖c3+ 44.♔d2 ♖c4**

Here White resigned. The point of my last move is that White cannot take on h5 – 45.♖xh5+ – because after 45...♔c6 the black pawns are unstoppable, e.g. 46.♖h8 b3 47.♖e8 b2 48.♖e1 ♖c1 49.♖xc1+ bxc1♕+ 50.♔xc1, with an easily won pawn ending.

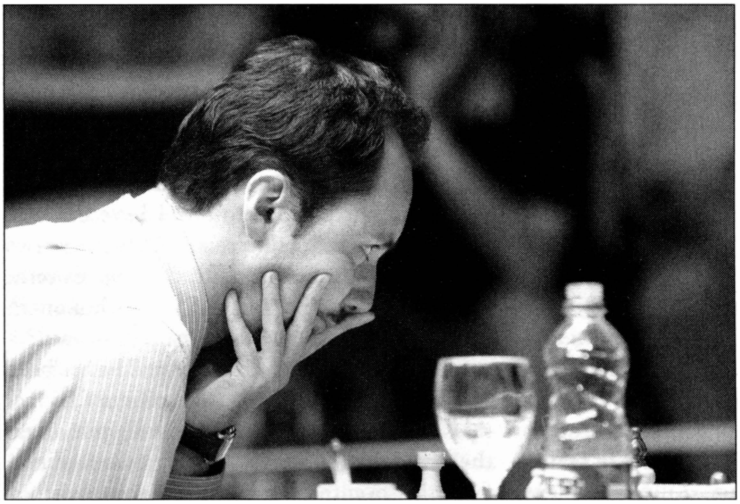
This was an interesting game. Not a piece of art, but except for one weak move I always played the best moves and I am only responsible for my moves. This proved to be a crucial win, as this was the moment that I broke away. After this game the distance between me and my pursuers grew to one and a half points.

'I guess the problem was the result, not the table'

'My approach was that to win this tournament the goal should be to win it convincingly.' Quiet and without a tinge of immodesty, Veselin Topalov tries to explain his strategy. Well, what can we say? We can't say that it didn't work! The day before the closing ceremony the new World Champion spoke to Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam about his sensational victory and the challenges ahead. In spite of his triumph, the soft-spoken Bulgarian still feels very much the same person that he was before San Luis, but he has noticed that the world around him begs to differ.

– *You ended the tournament on a quiet note, with a short draw against Polgar. After you secured the title against Kasimdzhanov the day before, I saw you quietly having dinner, sipping at a glass of water, and I had the impression that you might go for some extra Elo gain in the last round. When did you decide that you were not going to play?*

'I had my chances in the final position against Kasimdzhanov. There is no sense in making a draw with Kasimdzhanov in a position in which



PRENSA MUNDIAL

'Carpe diem', as they say in my local. Veselin Topalov was the first to step up to the plate, vacated by Kasparov's retirement.

you can never lose and then playing against Judit. If I play for rating points, I should play for a win against Kasimdzhanov.'

– *This also means that before the game against Kasimdzhanov you had decided that a draw was fine.*

'Yeah, this is what Silvio told me. If you're not completely winning then you agree a draw. I probably had some chances, but you know, the governor is waiting... (Laughs) I didn't want the people to wait for another hour.'

– *That was very kind of you.*

'I hope so. I hope they appreciated it.'

– *It all started a bit more dramatically with your win against Leko in the first round. Leko said that if he had won this game, we would have seen a completely different tournament. Looking at your results of the past year, I am not so sure about that.*

'In Linares I lost in the second round and in Sofia I also did pretty badly in the beginning. Maybe it could have been the other way round, but I think it is impossible to deny that this year I had the best results. No matter whether I started with a loss or with a win. It's like this thing about the table, that I was always playing at the same table. Peter also complained about that. It's funny, if I had had a minus-6 result no one would have complained, but now I was on plus 6 and everyone was saying that it was not fair. I guess the problem was the result, not the table.'

– *Leko also said that if this tournament was played five times again, there might be five different winners.*

'(Abruptly) No. No, I don't believe that. You may have two or three maybe, but not five. Then there would not be any difference between this and a knockout event. This was the reason why many players didn't like the knock-out format. A different champion every time. This is supposed to be a fair system.'

– *Vishy Anand argued that this tournament was no tougher than the knockout championship in New Delhi, for instance.*

'It's just different. I don't think it was tougher, just different.'

– *But you think it is fairer.*

'In fact, when someone wins any kind of championship then in my opinion it is always fair. We don't have a perfect system. You cannot say that Kasimdzhanov was not a fair winner in Libya, because he played all the strongest opponents and won in the end. But I don't think anyone would say that I was not a fair winner here.'

– *Any system has its drawbacks...*

'Yes. In Dortmund, when I played Peter (Leko) in the final, he played fantastic chess, of course, but, OK, I played 16 days in a row without a rest day. I mean, is this fair? You can always discuss this.'

– *Still you said he was the deserved winner in that tournament.*

'I think so. I am World Champion now, not because I played the best chess, but because I won more points than the rest. It's very difficult to say who is a better player or a worse player. You can say this player has better results now and this is what people look at.'

– *You're getting notorious for your strings of wins. You had a huge number in Tripoli, you had this final dash in Sofia, and now again. Is this something you sense at a certain moment? That you're more or less feeling points are coming your way?*

'No, no. It's game after game. The level is high so you cannot be sure that you will win the next day. You can have some feeling, but you can never be sure. Of course, at a certain point I realized I was winning one game after the other – when I won against Svidler, Polgar and then Kasimdzhanov. I won both games as Black and I was thinking, "What's going on? This is not really normal."

– That's what you said towards the end of the tournament. To keep your concentration you kept going from game to game. You tried to approach each game as if it was the first one.

'This is only partly true, of course, as towards the end I was playing for the result. Not taking risks like in the first leg. But, really, I tried not to think about the title. My approach was that to win this tournament the goal should be to win it convincingly. If you try to win it convincingly it's easier to win it. You shouldn't make calculations like, in the third round I'll take a rest, I'll make a draw with black because it's a good result. You have to just go for it.'

– People may be wondering about the secret of your success. There was the table, which has already been discussed...

'(Laughingly) Yes, and my lunches with Nigel (Short). And the chip somewhere in my hair, which I read. And doping...'

– Yes, when are we going to see the result of the doping test?

'This I don't know. But it was really something serious. Because first you give the ...eh'

– Urine...

'Yes, and then you have to divide it into two small tubes and then put them in some vessel. And I had to do all this myself. Put on labels and put it inside and lock the cases. And they go somewhere. In fact the water I was drinking during the last game helped a lot because I immediately... eh'

– And you don't have any worries they may find something?

'I don't think so.'

– Some caffeine...

'Maybe.'

– So, the caffeine is not the secret of your success either. What about your beard?

'I started to grow it in Monaco after my 30th birthday. I said, now I have to look smarter, now that I am 30. (Pauses) But... I don't want to criticize anyone or make comparisons, but I have been working very hard and very professionally for the last years. I have always done my best, and my team is very good. I have a PR man in Bulgaria, a sponsor, a manager, and now Cheparinov has started to help me. I have the best team. That makes a difference. There were two players who came here with their wives only. How do you expect to defend your title alone?'

– So this beard was only some kind of talisman?

'I had many. (Shows the armband he has been wearing all through the tournament) In fact this is something people in Bulgaria put on on the first day of spring. It's a Bulgarian tradition from the seventh century. And here in Argentina it is spring. A fan from Bulgaria gave it to me. I thought, why not? And I like it, I like the colours. The tribe that founded Bulgaria came from the Volga River, from Asia. They stopped at the Danube River where they laid the foundation of Bulgaria. In the meantime, the sister of their leader, Khan Asparukh, stayed in Romania. Every spring he sent her a message to let her know everything was fine. They put this letter around the neck of a dove, but during this long flight its neck started bleeding and the cord around its neck became white and red. I am not superstitious at all but now I may start to believe it a little bit, because you have the table and this...'

– Apart from these inexplicable things you also had Cheparinov. What is his strength?

'You know, I've worked with many people. Famous coaches, big names, but the problem with all of them was that they were good, but they also had their families. They want to come and show what they know and take their money. But they don't have the freshness. These experienced and famous coaches and trainers they are kind of workers. Young guys like Cheparinov, they are fresh, they want to work, and they have the ambition to become better. This year Cheparinov has helped me three times. In the second leg in Linares, before and in Sofia and for this championship. I set him tasks and he works through the night. In the morning he tells me "no problems" or "problems". And most of the time when I am playing he is sleeping. So in fact we work non-stop.'

– When we talked in Salamanca (New In Chess

2005/5) you said that your absence of fear to lose made the difference between you and the others. But taking defeats less hard also implied less joy when you win.

'That is true in fact.'

– *Still here I was waiting for some kind of explosion, if ever so small...*

'No, no. I am already 30. I have lost many many important games in my life and I won many so I am not easily surprised anymore.'

– *You even said you were not really looking forward to the festivities in Bulgaria.*

'No, I am little bit afraid of that. Let's say I reached my chess nirvana... (Thinks) OK, I enjoy the game, but I try to look at the result as the conclusion of the game without too many feelings. In fact, this is my approach to sports events. When I watch soccer or tennis, I don't have emotions about some team. I try to observe. But of course, when I am involved I have many people behind me, who also depend on the results.'

> *'Many incredible stories are written about me, and sometimes we laugh about them.'*

– *There's something people call the World Champion's disease, a certain loss of perspective once someone becomes World Champion, that has even hit naturally sober and down-to-earth players. Is this also something where you think, this is not going to happen to me?*

'I expect not. In my case I am used to not being World Champion, so for me this is kind of a dream, and when it is over, life will go on. I'll try, of course, to keep this title and show my best, but it will not be a big drama if I lose it. Then I will return to this normal state.'

– *But still you must be very happy. You must wake up in the morning and think life is good.*

'No, in fact I am just getting crazy. I cannot walk around here because I have to give autographs all the time to the fans and yesterday I gave almost ten long interviews and today will be the same. And this has already been going on for almost a week. Since I was leading, most of the people wanted pictures with me. And in fact they don't really care about Veselin, they just see, OK this will be the World Champion, so it's good to have a picture. If it was Anand they'd go for Anand. This is life. And I am getting a bit fed up with it (with a short apologetic laugh).'

– *So you're looking forward to the quiet anonymity in Salamanca.*

'Yes, but bad news, because I know it's on the radio. My only hope now is this big Ibero-American meeting in Argentina with Castro and Chavez and all these important guys. Maybe once that starts, they will not give me much attention anymore.'

– *Maybe you shouldn't be too optimistic there...*

'Yeahh... (Silently) I'll just not pick up the phone.'

– *You take this objective view and you have said that you had some luck here, which is why you want to play and prove that your result here was not a matter of luck.*

'Here I had some luck, but I was not as lost in this game (against Leko – DJtG) as I was winning against Moroz. This was completely winning. And I was also winning against Anand. In two games I could have scored more points, but I could also have scored less in other games. I cannot say that I was extremely lucky. I have to look at the future. I have observed that when people become champion, any kind of title, classical, knock-out or FIDE, they feel pressure and do not show such good results afterwards. I don't know, this may also happen to me. Immediately after this you have many celebrations and no time to train.'

– *So in fact you should try to avoid the celebrations as much as possible...*

'I will try, but it's not so easy. I have obligations with MTel and you have to go there.'

– *You say this has already been going on for a week. On the various play sites where the games were shown people were incredibly enthusiastic. You grew into a hero very fast. Was this something you had any idea about?*

'Sometimes Silvio would tell me something. Because many incredible stories are written about me, and sometimes we laugh about them. The last thing I read was that I was relaxing with swimming and judo. And that I had many secret girl friends everywhere. Stuff like that. But so far it has not been too tough to cope with.'

– *You don't see a big risk that you will get carried away...*

'I hope not. In fact, you know, somehow the game with Kasimdzhanov was over and then the next day I did the same things I always do and I thought I was the same person. I couldn't see the difference. But it seems that for other people I am different now.'

– *These were 14 long rounds. Obviously you had your regimen of preparing and playing, but how did you find time to relax?*

'Things were going very smoothly, so I didn't feel any pressure, in fact. In the beginning I told myself: Just play, there are many rounds, no calculations, just play chess. And then my closest pursuer was one and a half points behind, so I was not really bothered, but of course you always have to be on the alert. For relaxation, in my case the easiest way is just zapping. Because you don't waste energy. You just zap. I was watching some TV, some movies, sports events. I was trying to follow sports events on TV and in the news, but not what people were writing about the tournament. This is more or less what I do at any event. And once, before the second free day, I went to San Luis till one o'clock.'

– *The most predictable next question concerns a possible reunification. The day before yesterday I was speaking to Judit Polgar and she said: 'What reunification? Garry has stopped and no one speaks about Kramnik anymore.' What are your ideas about this?*

'In fact, I don't want to be involved in chess politics. Silvio deals with this. I believe that a World Champion, or any important chess player, should do three things: play chess, popularize chess and win money. In this respect a World Champion and a chess star is more or less the same. If you ask the question, who is the strongest player, I think this year this is clear. And then, if he is number seven, he shouldn't play the number one. I don't mind playing him, because he is a great player. He beat Kasparov and he is only the second player to go over 2800 Elo points in history. But at the present moment he is number seven. But if there are sponsors interested and if they believe this is a worthy match, no problems at all.'

– *In Salamanca you said: Kasparov has quit chess, I don't think about him anymore. Would you start thinking about him now?*

'Yeah. I mean, of course we are talking about him, but I would really start thinking about him seriously as a chess player if he returns. If not, then he will just continue to tell stories and remind us of his existence, but I would never prepare for him anymore. But of course it's impossible to forget Kasparov like this.'

– *Would you like to play against him?*

'(Immediately) In fact yes, why not? But these are just talks. And the longer he is away, the more difficult it will be for him to return.'

– *But you would see this as a really nice challenge?*

'(Nods) Yes. Because you may like the guy or not, but as a chess player he is really God (casts his eyes to the ceiling).'

– *In Salamanca we were talking about the real chess players. You didn't want to compare yourself to them...*

'No, I have a new theory now. There are World Champions and great World Champions. In my opinion, they were Alekhine, OK this is personal because I like him, Fischer and Kasparov. Maybe Karpov, he was also great.'

– *And still you don't see yourself in that...*

'(Laughs almost embarrassed) No, come on.'

– *But it cannot be denied that you are going to be the third player to cross the 2800 mark.*

'Yes, so it seems. But this is not the same. Now with so many people having 2700 it is completely different. I don't feel anything special about this.'

– *Is this your character? Suppose that in the coming two years you win everything there is to win, would you still think of yourself as a normal champion?*

'This is something that people decide. Not me. But I am not sure that I will be capable of winning both major classical tournaments and rapid events. There was Kasparov trying to win all the games in his life, but objectively in rapid chess I am not that good. My strength is classical chess, and I am focused now mainly on these major events. I will play exhibitions, but I have my doubts about winning these blindfold and rapid tournaments. I am not sure I will be able do that.'

After retiring in 2005, Garry Kasparov took on a new role with New In Chess, that of occasional columnist. His pungent observations on contemporary chess, coupled with analytical insights and the occasional reminder of how far ahead of the pack his opening preparation was make his contributions fascinating reading. In the following piece, he marked the first anniversary of his retirement, with a look at the first post-Kasparov Linares tournament.

Another Linares spectator

Garry Kasparov

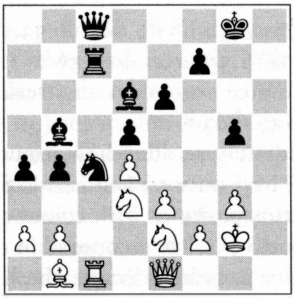
This year, for the first time in a decade, I joined thousands of chess fans around the world as a Linares spectator. The last time this happened was in 1995. There was no event in 1996 and this two year gap occurred during a huge change in the chess world. In that span we moved from hearing tournament news weeks or months after they were finished to watching the games live on the Internet. Apart from the obvious benefit this has for every fan, it has allowed me to indulge in a form of fantasy chess in my retirement, competing against my old rivals in real time by trying to find the best moves during the games.

Of course watching from the comfort of one's home – or hotel room – is quite a different game. No heat of battle, no glare from the lights or the opponent, and no ticking clock – not that they tick anymore. Still, I admit to gaining considerable pleasure from finding a nice idea here and there.

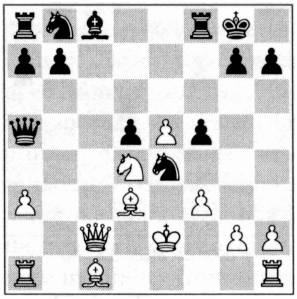
One such opportunity arose in the game Ivanchuk-Topalov, which was otherwise unremarkable for anything other than Ivanchuk taking one of his infamous days off and playing horribly.

White has a passive position but Topalov's over-aggressive 26...g5 gave White feeble signs of life. After 28...♕c8 I assumed Ivanchuk would attempt to gain counterplay with 29.♕h1, threatening ♕h6. 29...♘d2 looks crushing, but White can force a draw with the stunning 30.♕h6!. ♖h1 is a threat and after 30...♖xc1 31.♘df4!! launches a sudden attack. Black has to take time to defend with 29...♕f8 or 29...f6, after which White's defensive chances improve significantly. Instead, Ivanchuk continued his vacation with 29.♘g1 and was eventually overrun.

Sometimes I felt I had seen a game before. Paco Vallejo was crushed by Leko in a Nimzo line that you simply cannot play unless you are sure your preparation is top notch.



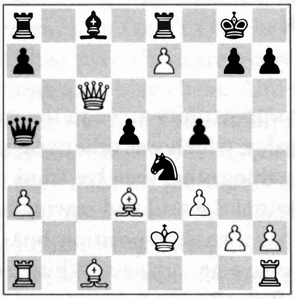
Ivanchuk-Topalov
position after 28...♕c8



Vallejo-Leko
position after 14...f5

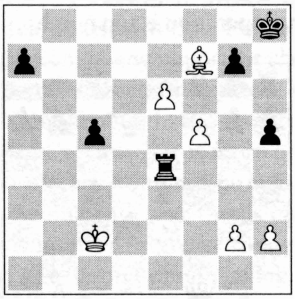
Yury Dokhoian and I regularly updated our work in this line because it was so popular and so sharp. If White cannot take the knight in the position after 14...f5, he is just a pawn down with his king in the centre. The best chance at this point, and here I agree with my old notes, is to immediately play 15.e6, disturbing Black's development.

The move 15.e6 was tried in an online blitz tournament but the game was a short draw: 15...♘c6 16.♘xc6 bxc6 17.e7 ♖e8 ½-½ Dobrov-Belov, Playchess.com 2005. White has no choice but to continue with wild complications after 18.♕xc6.



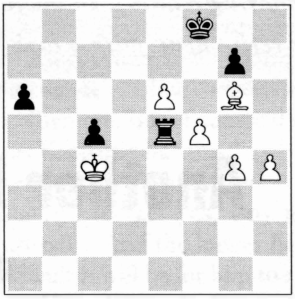
18...♖xe7 (the spectacular 18...♗b7 doesn't work. The machine shows how the white king can survive in the centre: 19.♕xb7 ♖ab8 20.♕c6 ♖b2+ 21.♔e3 d4+ 22.♔xd4 ♖xe7 23.♕d5+ – 23.fxe4?? ♕e5+ 24.♔e3 f4+ forces mate – 23...♕xd5+ 24.♔xd5 ♘f6+ 25.♔c4 ♖c7+ 26.♔d4) 19.♕xa8 ♘g3+ 20.♔d1 ♕c3 21.♗d2 ♕xa1+ 22.♗c1 ♕c3 23.♗d2=.

Leko went on to win an endgame without visible fanfare, but if it was a forced win it deserves more than the 'etc.' it received in most places.



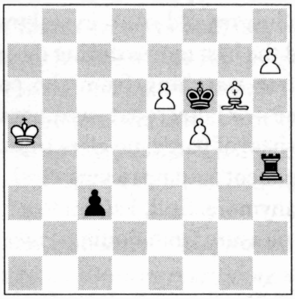
position after 33...h5

Here Vallejo continued **34.♗xh5**, but 34.♔d3, instead of grabbing the h-pawn, provides several spectacular drawing chances: 34...♖e5 35.♔c4 a6 (35...h4 36.♔b5=) 36.h4 ♔h7 37.g3 ♔h8 (forcing White to win material and free the black king, a sort of anti-zugzwang) 38.♗xh5 ♔g8 39.♗g6 ♔f8 40.g4 ♖e4+? 41.♔xc5 ♖xg4 (41...a5 42.g5=) 42.h5 draw.



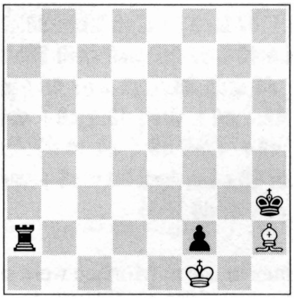
analysis diagram after 40.g4

A better winning try is 40...♔e7, requiring White to find some nice breakthroughs: 41.g5 ♔d6 42.h5 ♖e4+ 43.♔c3 ♖g4 44.h6! gxh6 45.♗f7! (White gives up all four pawns to reach a drawn bishop vs three pawns endgame) 45...hxg5 46.f6 ♖e4 47.e7 ♖xe7 48.fxe7 ♔xe7 49.♗h5=. White even has an unnecessarily spectacular drawing alternative with 45.gxh6(?) ♖h4 46.h7 ♔e7 47.♔b3 a5 48.♔a3 c4 (48...♔f6 49.♔b3) 49.♔a4 ♔f6 50.♔xa5 c3



51.e7! ♔xe7 52.h8♕! ♖xh8 53.♔b4 ♖c8 54.♔b3! ♔f6 55.♔c2 ♔e5 56.f6 (this third pawn sacrifice reaches a theoretical draw) 56...♔xf6 57.♗d3=.

I immediately recalled how proud Botvinnik was to have once tricked Laszlo Szabo into reaching this position, with colours reversed, in Budapest 1952. He recounted in one of his game collections how Szabo, the hometown hero, came to the adjournment to collect the scalp of the world champion only to be shocked with this draw. Pal Benko also produced several memorable studies with this theme, including this amazing one from 1967:

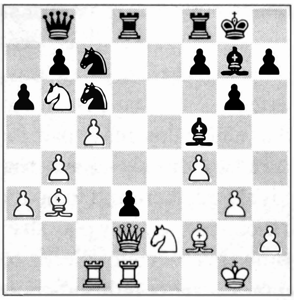


Pal Benko 1967

1.♗c7!! 1.♗b8? ♖a8. **1...♖b2 2.♗d6! ♖c2 3.♗e5 ♖d2 4.♗f4 ♖e2 5.♗b8 ♖e8 6.♗g3!! ♔g4 7.♔xf2** ½-½

Vallejo later got his revenge against the top ten, going all the way to the top and beating Topalov with the black pieces. Topalov made an unwise opening choice, a sharp line of the Semi-Slav that gave the imaginative Spaniard the sort of game he prefers. While preparing for Vallejo in Linares last year we had a couple of interesting ideas in this variation, but Yury weighed in with this piece of common sense. 'Why try to beat Vallejo in a sharp line where he'll feel creative and energized? He feels much happier in these sharp positions. Play something dull and dumb!' And that's just what I did, winning a long game. It's good to remember that there is more to choosing the best opening than finding the best moves.

Speaking of openings, Teimour Radjabov proved himself undaunted by popular opinion and continued to play the King's Indian Defence with good results. This is an opening that needs more than good preparation; it requires the enthusiasm and optimism of youth. I analysed the types of positions from Ivanchuk-Radjabov in preparation for my match with Karpov in 1990. Ivanchuk played for an advantage against an isolated pawn, only to forget that it was also passed with no white pawn on c3 or e3. It was amusing to watch the black d-pawn advance like a common soldier transformed into an unstoppable Achilles, eventually administering a decisive fork on d2.



Ivanchuk-Radjabov
position after 32...d3

33.♘c3 ♘d4 34.♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 35.♔g2 ♖fe8 36.♖e1 ♗xc3 37.♕xc3 ♗e4+ 38.♔f2 d2 39.♖xe4 ♖xe4 40.♖d1 ♖ed4 41.♗c4 ♘e8 42.♕e3 ♔f8 43.♕e5 ♕xe5 44.fxe5 ♘c7 White resigned.

As these pages are tucked in toward the end I haven't felt it necessary to repeat what you already know, that Levon Aronian again displayed his tremendous practical qualities and won a deserved victory. His improbable come from behind was assisted by the complete collapse of the early leaders, Leko and Svidler, who may wish to inquire after the phone number of Kramnik's physical therapist.

The final-round pairing of Leko and Aronian allowed for a poetic finish and an impressive clear first place for the Armenian.

The split-venue format was used in two of my world championship matches against Karpov – London/Leningrad in 1986 and New York/Lyon in 1990. As a creature of habit who attempts to establish a comfortable cocoon on the road I was not a fan of this concept, although in both cases I was the first to score after the break. Pity the veterans of the 1938 AVRO tournament, whose competitors were taken on the road around the Netherlands like a travelling circus.

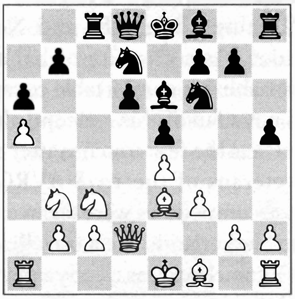
Topalov's comeback was clearly a matter of this continental divide. He lost three games in Mexico and escaped Morelia with 2½/7, his only win a product of Ivanchuk's self-destruction. Having in this painful way dismissed the rumours of his invincibility, Topalov recovered miraculously to win the Spanish side of the event by a full point.

Such is the new world order, or disorder. There is much more instability from tournament to tournament and even from round to round than when the top three of Kasparov, Kramnik, and

Anand dominated the rating list year after year.

Seemingly overnight there has been a dramatic shift – not one of the 'big three' was present in Linares this year. Those quick to anoint Topalov and Anand as a new dominant pair for the foreseeable future can now see clearly that the next generation is already here and in no mood to pay respects to their elders. They play sharply and to win and while this inevitably leads to more errors, it also means more fighting chess. If this is the future of Linares and of chess without Kasparov I can only applaud – if a little wistfully.

After Linares attention moves to the Amber tournament in Monaco. I confess I'm not an admirer of such blatant spectacles and I never participated in the annual event. There is no audience present and the event produces little of lasting value. It's not true I have always been 'allergic' to blindfold chess, however. In Hamburg in 1985 I gave a blindfold simul on ten boards, including one computer opponent against which I announced a mate in ten. (Those were the days...) Although I scored +8 =2 it was not something I wanted to do on a regular basis. That said, there have been several phenomenal games in this year's edition of Amber. Anand-Grischuk was a battle royal that displayed all the creativity of the combatants, realizing the potential of rapid chess as envisioned by one of its pioneers, David Bronstein.



Grischuk-Topalov (blindfold)
position after 11.a5

Topalov's **11...♖xc3** against Grischuk shouldn't pass without comment. We are used to seeing this sacrifice to win a pawn on e4 or to shatter White's pawn structure. Here the world champion played it only to achieve d6-d5! His moves 20...♕c8! and 21...♘c5! were also notable shots. **12.♕xc3 d5 13.0-0-0 ♗e7 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♖xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗c4 ♗xc4 17.♕xc4 ♗g5 18.f4 exf4 19.♗xf4 0-0 20.♖d1 ♕c8 21.♕d4 ♘c5 22.♘xc5 ♗xf4+ 23.♔b1 ♗xh2 24.♕d5 ♕g4 25.♖h1 ♗c7 26.♕xh5 ♕xh5 27.♖xh5 ♗xa5 28.♘xa6 ♗d8 29.♘c5 b6 30.♘d7 ♖e8 31.♖e5 ♖xe5 32.♘xe5 f5 33.c3 ♗c7 34.♘f3 ♔f7 35.♔c2 ♔f6 36.♔d3 g5 37.b4 g4 38.♘d4 ♗d6 39.♘b5 ♗e7 40.♘d4 ♗f8 41.♘c6 ♔e6 42.♘d4+ ♔e5 43.♘c6+ ♔f4 44.♘d4 ♗d6 45.♘e2+ ♔e5 46.♘d4 f4 47.♘c6+ ♔d5 48.♘d4 ♗f8 49.c4+ ♔e5 50.♘c6+ ♔d6 51.♘d4 ♔e5 52.♘c6+ ♔d6 ½-½**

The openings in use in Monaco were significant. The Najdorf appeared again and again, with many players indulging with both colours. Combined with Radjabov's restoration of the KID and the popularity of the tense positions arising from the 4...a6 Slav, it doesn't look like we are doomed to the Berlin and the Queen's Gambit Declined. The players still want fight and fun.

Aronian's sky-high confidence after his Linares victory was evident in Monaco. He started nicely by beating Van Wely with a 2.b3 Sicilian, Topalov with 1.f4, and then defeated Leko and Grischuk with 3.♗c4 and 3.♗d3 in the Sicilian (after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6). He again showed his muscle by beating Svidler in the final round with 1.♘c3 and 1.e4 ♘c6. These successes convince him he can get away with such extravagance in all his games, not quite the case. He pays a heavy price for these experiments when they go too far. He'll be one to watch in Monaco next year if he combines normal openings with his obvious strength.

Morozevich and Anand shared first place in the combined table, but Morozevich's incredible +8 result in the blindfold is what stands out. These impressive results only confirm that he is one of that rare breed of players who simply don't require a board and pieces at all!

I will close with a few words to honour my great predecessors. The greatest fighter in chess history, Viktor Kortchnoi, turned 75 on March 23rd. A day later, seventh world champion Vasily Smyslov eased into his 85th year. George Bernard Shaw wrote 'We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.' While Shaw was no fan of chess, he could have been talking about our game's evergreens, Kortchnoi and Smyslov. Hail, gentlemen!

When Matthew Sadler gave up his book review column in 2004, New In Chess faced the tricky problem of how to replace such a unique columnist. Their choice was inspired – Scottish GM Jonathan Rowson took over the reins. Although his style is very different from Sadler's, he too brings a unique perspective to the subject – for example, how many chess book reviewers have ever started their piece with a detailed description of how most people fail to wash their hands properly, after visiting the lavatory? I will spare you that particular piece, but the following is a typical example of Rowson's intellectual, yet highly entertaining style.

The right kind of smoothness

Jonathan Rowson

This is my fifteenth review column for New In Chess. '15' is not as important a number as '10', or as substantial as '20', but it is an attention-seeking number all the same. Sufficiently so that now seems to be a good time to reflect on what I have been up to in this column so far, and what might be expected in future.

With this task at hand, I am reminded of Kierkegaard's remark that 'The majority of men are subjective towards themselves and objective towards all others – terribly objective sometimes, but the real task is in fact to be objective towards one's self and subjective towards all others.' He was writing about the importance of cultivating self-awareness and empathy, but I feel the point might also apply to book reviewing.

An 'objective' review tends to consider the stated aims of the book, the suitability of the author, the target audience, related books already in the market, value for money, production quality and, keeping these factors in mind, the contents of the book are examined with care, the pros and cons of style and substance are weighed, accuracy is checked, and then, keeping the readership of the review in mind, the book is given some sort of numerical score, or, if that is deemed too vulgar, a score coded in terms of a recommendation hierarchy: 'not recommended', 'recommended', 'highly recommended', 'completely and utterly recommended', 'so recommended it hurts' etc.

Although there is a place for this kind of considered appraisal, reviews that are strenuously objective tend to be boring to read. Such reviews are of most value to impressionable consumers who are genuinely unsure what to buy, and who earnestly read magazines and surf the Internet looking at reviews because they want to sort the wheat from the chaff in their minds before they get their plastic involved.

But how many people are really like that? I suspect most people read book reviews primarily as a form of entertainment, and although a reviewer should always be conscientious enough to consider the care and effort taken by the author of a book, he also has some responsibility to entertain his readers. This is not always an easy balance to strike, but in general I would much rather hear about how one particular individual feels about a book, what it reminded them of, how they made use of it, whether they read it in the bath or the train etc. From that sort of subjective appraisal I feel that I get a stronger sense of the book's value, because it leaves space for me to imagine what the book might mean for me.

Needless to say, the objective and subjective approaches are not mutually exclusive, and the best reviews will include elements of both. It should also go without saying that the views expressed in this column are entirely my own. Nonetheless, it is probably worth saying that my own views are quite capricious. I attempt to be as fair and considered as possible, but the fact that I don't particularly care for a book does not necessarily mean that it is not worth buying for you. I am writing as a 29-year-old Scottish Grandmaster with biases and deadlines, and I can't really do this job any other way. I often know the authors and publishers involved in the books I am reviewing, and my reviews tend to reflect my personal response to the overall purpose and feel of a book. I gauge this response by closely considering parts of the material, but it is quite rare that I read a book from cover to cover before deciding whether I like it.

These admissions bring me to some gentle regrets. Just as I don't always read a book from cover to cover to decide on the value of a book, I suspect few readers pay much attention to the ins and outs of the reviews I write, but rather look for the 'take-home message'; and if I don't state it explicitly, infer it from the general tone of the review.

For example, when I reviewed Susan Polgar's *Breaking Through* and Jennifer Shahade's *Chess Bitch* in the same column, I thought the implicit message was that the former is solid but not particularly stimulating, while the latter is fascinating in general but contentious in places. It was not my intention to compare the books, but if I had to choose between them, I would gladly choose the latter every time. However, the main message received by many readers seems to have been that the former is better than the latter, which was not what I wanted to say at all. Similarly, when reviewing *Garry Kasparov's Greatest Chess Games: Volume 1*, by Igor Stohl, I tried to make it clear that my problem with this book was not with the author's effort, which was formidable, or the content of the book, which is Kasparov's best games, and therefore compelling by definition. My problem with the book was the general concept of somebody with little connection with Kasparov trying to convey the brilliance of his games with annotations that are technically strong, but that lack the insight and texture that can only come from a closer knowledge of Kasparov himself, and the fine details of the background contexts surrounding the games. Nonetheless, many have told me that they considered my review of this book to be unfair.

Well, you can't please everybody, and nor should you try to, but fortunately I can partly make amends for this misunderstanding because Gambit recently released ***Garry Kasparov's Greatest Chess Games Volume 2***, and since the books differ primarily just in terms of the period covered, my thoughts on this book apply equally to Volume 1.

Any 'objective' review of this book would have to conclude that it is well worth having. For starters it is very well produced, and although the cover photos of Kasparov are far from flattering, it is a pleasure to have, to hold, and to read. The selected games are of course formidable, and, in the games that I played through, Stohl's notes do help to clarify the value of the moves on the board, and are especially helpful at the late opening/early middlegame phase, when Kasparov is particularly strong. Moreover, you can be confident that the level of accuracy is high. Certainly, if I were an analytical error, I wouldn't even try to get inside this book. In order to do so, I would have to have already survived the scrutiny of manifold previous annotators, and then hide away from Stohl for months on end, disguising myself in such a way that I would not be seen by his Silicon allies, or editorial team.

And yet, in spite of the quality of the games, the production quality, and the accuracy of the annotations, my initial qualms remain. My more 'subjective' review involves telling you that I love Kasparov's games, and some of the most absorbing hours of my life, especially when I was younger, have been spent trying to make sense of them. You might imagine therefore that these books would be a great boon, but I just don't feel that way, because I find them somewhat soulless. I prefer Kasparov's games with notes from the man himself, or people who know him well. Sometimes the moves themselves are sufficiently engaging, but where there are comments, they should elevate me towards the altitude of Kasparov's thoughts.

Perhaps this is too high a standard to set, but on this personal criterion, Stohl cannot really deliver, no matter how hard he tries.

However, the excellent sales and reviews of the first volume suggest that my view is in the minority, and even with my reservations about these books, I am still glad to have them, if only because they amount to 'Kasparov on tap'. So are they good books or not? By now you should realize that this is the wrong question. The onus is on you to decide whether they will be good books for you.

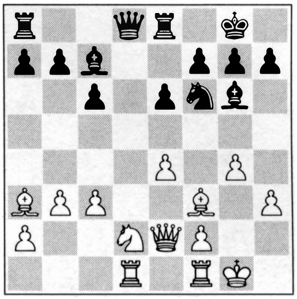
Staying with subjectivity, Gambit has introduced a new series of opening books entitled *Chess Explained*, including the eagerly awaited new book by Yermolinsky on ***The Classical Sicilian***. The concept of the new series is to have an expert on an opening choose 25 games in an opening, and analyse them based on their own experience, with one eye to the theoretical status of various lines, and the other to helping the reader develop a general feel for the main ideas of the opening. I like the concept, which amounts to making opening theory more personal, and the learning of openings more lively. To paraphrase Yermolinsky: 'more verbiage, less data'.

I imagine anybody who read *The Road to Chess Improvement* would be eager to read Yermolinsky's chess thoughts on almost any subject, and although the structure and content of this book does clip his wings a little, the lifeblood of the book is still his pragmatic, direct and humorous tone. Moreover, I have the impression that the theory is covered in sufficient depth that players of all levels could confidently follow his advice on all aspects of the opening.

Amatzia Avni has written widely about the subjective side of chess, and his recent book ***Devious Chess*** (Batsford) goes even further than before. I very much like this book, and think it will be especially appealing to club players, because it is written in a friendly and exploratory tone, managing to treat chess with the combination of seriousness and frivolity that it deserves. There are many striking examples of chess 'deviousness' in the book, but, as is often the case, the example that jumped out at me was one that I had seen before.

David Norwood
Sam Collins
Birmingham 2002

1.g3 d5 2.♗g2 c6 3.♘f3 ♗g4 4.b3 ♘d7 5.♗b2 ♘gf6 6.0-0 e6 7.d3 ♗d6 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.h3 ♗h5 10.e4 dxe4 11.dxe4 ♗e5 12.c3 ♗c7 13.♕e2 ♘e5 14.g4 ♘xf3+ 15.♗xf3 ♗g6 16.♗a3 ♖e8 17.♖ad1?



So far, the moves look fairly standard, and I remember Dave Norwood relaying these moves in the post-mortem as if nothing had happened that was of any consequence. And yet after Black's next move, White is completely lost:

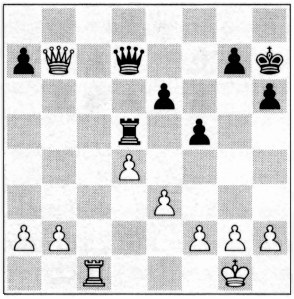
17...♘d5!!

I like the directness of Avni's note here: 'Do me a favour, don't try to find the positional justification of why this move works. It just does. I don't believe Black had entertained any evil thoughts earlier on: his 16...♖e8 was compulsory, and contained no threat; it is only 17.♖ad1?, robbing White's queen of the flight square on d1, which makes this knight leap viable.'

18.♘c4 18.exd5 exd5 embarrasses the queen, and White can't even cut his losses to a pawn due to 19.♘e4 ♕h4! followed by winning the piece back with destruction on the kingside.

18...♘xc3 19.♕e3 ♘xd1 20.♖xd1 ♕h4 And Black was completely winning, although somehow Norwood used his wiles to make a draw.

If breezy tactics like that appeal to you, you will enjoy Van Perlo's ***Endgame Tactics***, recently published by New In Chess, which contains 1104 of them, all in the endgame. As well as being a feast of enjoyable tricks, the book contains many positions that strongly resemble endgame practice. Moreover, although there is not much text in the book, Van Perlo does have a distinctive and avuncular tone, which gives this book a personal touch. He also seems to have searched far and wide for the material, and the following example is apparently a 'fragment of an amateur game that is supposed to have been played in Yugoslavia in 1949'. Some might find that sort of vague reference troubling, but I just find it amusing, especially when most of the other sources are entirely credible.



'White is completely winning, but he thought he could finish Black off simply with **1.♖c7?** The reply – do you see it? **1...♖c5!!** It is unbelievable, but nothing can save White now. These things happen.'

Last, but by no means least, I am glad to have the opportunity to recommend ***Smart Chip from St. Petersburg*** (New In Chess) by Genna Sosonko. I must confess that until recently I didn't read Sosonko's articles in this magazine, mainly because he seemed to be writing about people that I had never met, and some whom I have never even heard of. The first time I realized what I had been missing out on was when, several months ago, I stumbled upon 'The Morpheus Variation' in this magazine – an essay about the relationship between chess and dreaming. I was impressed and engaged, and remember taking my pen from my pocket to underline the most striking lines, something I don't usually do when reading a chess magazine! Since then, I have learned to appreciate that Sosonko's essays about chess are incomparably deep and insightful. Although they are often ostensibly about unfamiliar people and places, they are all really about what chess tells us about human nature. For this reason, they have that rare quality of being accessible to any thoughtful person.

From time to time, usually after a loss, I fear that chess is a dehumanizing game; not a source of beauty and a path of personal development, but a childish game where we sublimate our atavistic instincts. Sosonko's essay on killer instinct put this fear in perspective, and I felt a lot better about it, knowing that I was not the only experienced player to have felt this way. In particular, I was struck by Gulko's advice to a relatively meek student: 'Understand, chess is a game for hooligans'. On reading this, I found myself smiling in recognition of something I had sensed for a long time, and I wondered whether this was the reason why I never felt fully at home in the chess world.

The two previously unseen essays are first rate. 'Genna Adonis' is about chess and fame, and 'The Stairway of Life' reflects on why it is difficult to play chess well as one gets older. In searching for a suitable quotation to give here, I was spoilt for choice, but in the end I opted for the following, from Genna Adonis, which captures the gripping nature of the prose:

'...Today's tournaments are composed exclusively of people who are young enough to be my grandchildren. There are new heroes on the stage, which is how it should be in chess and in life. Only older people remember my name, although there are exceptions, of course. Quite recently, when I'd tried on a pair of glasses with frames that I liked and asked for them to be kept apart for a few days until I made up my mind, the shop assistant, writing my name down, enquired whether I was related to the famous chess player. When he heard that I in fact was that chess player, the young man was very surprised, as he had thought that Sosonko had died a long time ago. I considered this a bad omen, didn't order my glasses there and never went into that shop again.'

'Smart Chip' in the title refers to Genrikh Chepukaitis, who was an outstanding blitz player and an expert on how to play in time trouble. On being asked whether one of his blitz games was sound he replied: 'Who knows, without a half-litre of vodka there's no way to tell.' I particularly enjoyed the chapter on Hein Donner, which portrays a truly singular character whom I would like to have met.

The photographs are germane, and my impression is that Sarah Hurst's translation is excellent because the prose remains fluent and intimate. The book as a whole is part chess history and part personal memoir. Anybody interested in what chess does to human beings, or who wants to understand chess as a form of life, will find these essays of enormous value. Sosonko writes with sustained subtlety and grace. I am glad to express my admiration for this outstanding collection, which I will revisit for many years to come.

Of all the GMs who have been regular contributors to New In Chess over the past 25 years, few have been as entertaining as Nigel Short. Always outspoken, usually controversial and occasionally downright rude, Nigel never fails to attract attention. On top of it all, he has played some pretty good chess over the period. The following tournament report is a typical example of his trenchant style.

All the president's points

Nigel Short

Due to a string of court cases that unsettled Indian chess life last year, Nigel Short had to wait for the 2006 Commonwealth Championship before he could defend the precious title he conquered in 2004. However, not only did the Englishman come to Mumbai as reigning Commonwealth champion, he also arrived in his new capacity of freshly elected President of the Commonwealth Chess Association. Once the clocks were started, the president knew no mercy, set a murderous pace and clinched first place with an undisputed tally of 9 out of 10. Or, as he puts it himself whilst describing the course of the championship: 'The paragraphs that follow contain a strong autobiographical bias which I hope bears less testament to personal vanity than to the fact that I dominated the tournament.'

My memories of the last Commonwealth Championship in Mumbai (see New In Chess 2004/2) have been considerably more enduring than the trophy that accompanied it. It is a poignant fact that those who commission such artefacts usually pay greater heed to ostentation than the ensuing problems of transportation. The 2004 trophy, which resembled a precarious metal and wood wedding confectionary, was kindly packed in a box for me while I attended to the extras bill before departure. Alas, those well-intentioned hands displayed greater eagerness than aptitude, and upon my arrival home I discovered the poor object smashed irredeemably into dozens of tiny pieces. Looking back on that event, I cannot help but remark how much water has since flowed under the bridge. P.T. Ummer Koya, whom I incorrectly, but understandably, described in my report at the time as the 'President' of the AICF (All India Chess Federation – ed.), no longer bestrides the Indian chess stage like a colossus. So dense and all grasping were the tentacles of his financial interests that the majority of the federation's not inconsiderable budget was paid out directly to him, or to companies in which he had a stake.

The downfall of this far from humble employee of the AICF, in a series of legal battles

A titled player – President of the Commonwealth Chess Association, *inter alia*.

which began in early 2005, had a great bearing on my own decision to become more actively involved in chess politics. Not only was P.T. Ummer a Vice President of FIDE, but also the President of the Commonwealth Chess Association (CCA). I had already been greatly irritated by his facility at deliberately misleading the public – so much so that I felt compelled to interrupt his speech, in front of government ministers, to the embarrassment of all concerned, at the opening ceremony in 2004 – but the last straw for me was the fiasco concerning the Commonwealth Championship in 2005, in which, as defending champion, I had hoped to compete. The venue was awarded to P.T. Ummer Koya's acolyte, Mr. S.L. Harsh, of Bikaner. If the late Tony Miles' devastating report (on chesscafe.com) of a previous Commonwealth Championship held in that city was even remotely accurate, this was a most dubious decision indeed, but my immediate concern was whether the event would take place at all. I posed this question to Mr. Harsh by telephone, explaining my worries. 'The Championship will take place in Bikaner as announced', he assured me. Was the Championship likely to be in any way affected by the outcome of Koya's latest court case? 'No, it will go ahead.'

I was not entirely convinced, but foolishly I trusted him: three mornings and 75 euros later I had my visa. Of course, the event was duly cancelled and, predictably enough, Mr. Harsh cited Koya's legal predicament as the excuse. My costs were relatively limited – the de Jager family in South Africa had spent thousands of dollars in buying tickets – but I was infuriated enough by this pointless dishonesty as to be determined to oust Koya and his coterie from this body. To cut a very long story short: two years later I was elected in Turin as President of the CCA, and Ravindra Dongre, the Bombay-based organizer of the previous Championship, Vice President. The wheel of fortune had turned.

The venue for the tournament was the Eskay Resort in Borivali. It was comfortable enough in itself – the top boards doing battle within a giant glass pyramid next to an opulent swimming pool – but it suffered from one severe drawback: Borivali is at the extremity of the vast sprawling metropolis of Mumbai and the Eskay Resort is at the extremity of Borivali. This would not have mattered in itself had there been sufficient accommodation nearby, but there wasn't. This meant that the vast majority of the competitors had to be bused in considerable distances through the cacophonous, chaotic, choking traffic in the midday heat. Even the most sturdy and phlegmatic of them were worse for wear by the time they arrived for the game – a fact, I am embarrassed to say, which may have contributed to my success.

I asked Ravi why he had switched the venue from the previously announced Mirador Hotel to this far-flung corner of Maharashtra. He explained that they had only secured the full sponsorship about a month before and it was all that was available. I apologize that it wasn't up to scratch.

For both good and bad reasons the tournament was somewhat weaker than the previous one. On the positive side, there were no Russians and Uzbeks participating. I am astonished that I have had to argue with ostensibly sane individuals against their inclusion, but Uzbeks should no more play in the Commonwealth Championship than Viktor Kortchnoi in the World Under 10s, or Vladimir Kramnik in women's events. It is not a question of discrimination: they are just not eligible – full stop. Regrettably a training camp in preparation for the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, meant that Indian superstars Krishnan Sasikiran, Pentala Harikrishna and Humpy Koneru were missing from the line-up.

The foreign contingent came from Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and the United Kingdom. It was not a bad turnout, but I hope for wider and deeper foreign representation next year when the event will be held in South Africa. The numerous Commonwealth countries in the vicinity – Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi etc. – are far less likely to find travel costs a deterrent.

The paragraphs that follow contain a strong autobiographical bias which I hope bears less testament to personal vanity than to the fact that I dominated the tournament. The general unavailability of published games has meant that I have had to rely on my own score sheets, and is perhaps a factor contributing to the impression of egotism.

There was a widespread public assumption that the ultimate destination of first prize was a foregone conclusion, as I outranked the number two seed, Surya Ganguly, by a good 100 Elo points. However as Feng-Hsiung Hsu pointed out in his book *Behind Deep Blue*, statistically speaking, even in such circumstances, victory, in a large open tournament, is far from being a certainty. I began well enough though, racking up three points before conceding a draw to IM Marani Majendran Venkatesh, who had a fantastic event – perhaps in part because he had wisely invested in lodgings in walking distance of the pyramid.

For the only time, I found myself trailing the lead. It did not last long.

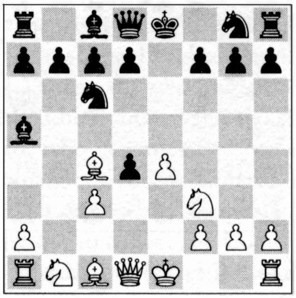
NOTES BY
Nigel Short

IG 5.8 – C52
Nigel Short
Abhijeet Gupta
Mumbai 2006 (5)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4

The Evans Gambit is a most pleasing weapon to possess in one's armoury. It perhaps does not have sufficient dependability for daily use, but, when sparingly and judiciously employed, it can be most effective in shaking the opponent out of his comfortable somnolence.

4...♗xb4 5.c3 ♗a5 6.d4 exd4



7.♕b3

It was a well-lubricated Alexander Khalifman who extolled this move over dinner in Moscow a few years ago, whilst we were discussing his book *Mikhail Chigorin: The First Russian Grandmaster*, co-authored with Sergey Soloviov. 'In vodka veritas', as they say. Naturally, when I returned home I immediately began to examine its potential.

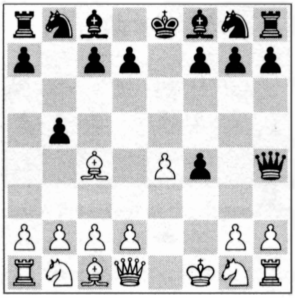
The idea, primarily, is to avoid 7.0-0 ♘ge7! which, as the great Garry Kimovich explains in *My Great Predecessors*, comes as something of a blow for any white player dreaming of an advantage in this opening.

7...♕f6 8.0-0 b5!?

To the best of my knowledge, this move is a novelty. The idea is well known, of course, from the Compromised Defence, which would be reached after 8...dxc3. Judging by the time consumed, however, it was not a product of home preparation.

9.♗xb5

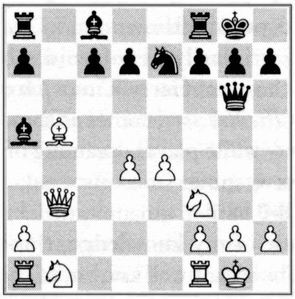
I paused for a while before making this capture, rather as I had paused before making the identical capture in my notorious 1993 Bryan Counter Gambit theme game with Garry Kasparov, in which the former World Champion was despatched in 15 short moves. Incidentally, while fully concurring that the diversionary sacrifice (as here) was not the best option available, I do not accept that the mandatory opening was entirely responsible for the Russian's defeat. It merely showed that even great geniuses are fallible when cut loose from their moorings. (Editor's note: as this exhibition game cannot be found in the official match book, here are the moves: 1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗c4 ♕h4+ 4.♔f1 b5 5.♗xb5 ♘f6 6.♘f3 ♕h6 7.♘c3 g5 8.d4 ♗b7 9.h4 ♖g8 10.♔g1 gxh4 11.♖xh4 ♕g6 12.♕e2 ♘xe4 13.♖xf4 f5 14.♘h4 ♕g3 15.♘xe4 1-0.)



9...♘ge7 10.♗g5 ♕g6 11.♗xe7 ♘xe7 12.cxd4

Pawns have been tossed hither and thither with gay abandon, but for now material equilibrium has been re-established. Black has two bishops, but the white pawn centre gives him the edge.

12...0-0



13.♘a3!

13.♕a3 is of course met by 13...♕b6!. The alternative 13.♕a4 ♗b6 14.♗xd7 ♗xd7 15.♕xd7 ♘c6! 16.d5 ♘d4! appeared most unpromising.

13...♖b8

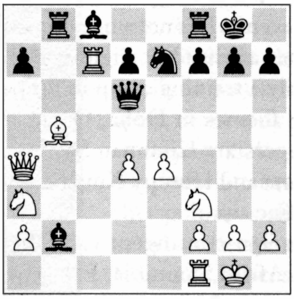
Not wrong in itself, but beginning an erroneous concept. Better was 13...d6 with a solid position.

14.♕a4 ♗c3?

Here is the culprit. Black attempts to resolve all his problems tactically, but the looseness of White's queenside is more illusory than real.

15.♖ac1 ♗b2 16.♖xc7 ♕d6

Not 16...♗xa3 17.♕xa3 ♖xb5 18.♕xe7.



17.♖xc8?

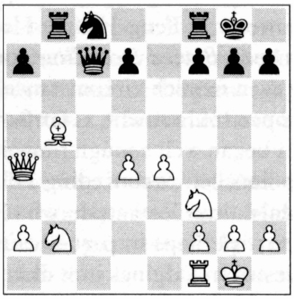
Inexplicably played without any hesitation.

I had already noticed that the simple 17.♖c5 ♗xa3 18.e5! was more or less winning when I played 15.♖ac1, but I simply forgot about it.

Considerably more complicated, but also promising was 17.♕xa7 ♗xa3 (in fact 17...♕b6! 18.♕xb6 ♖xb6 19.♘c4 ♖xb5 20.♖b1 is Black's best option, although White is firmly in the driving seat) 18.♕xb8 ♗a6 19.e5 ♕b4 20.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 21.♗xa6 ♕b6 22.♖xd7 ♔e8 23.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 24.♗c4 with wretched survival prospects for Black.

17...♘xc8 18.♘c4 ♕c7 19.♘xb2

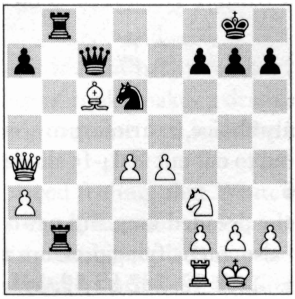
As a consequence of my previous error I consumed much of my remaining time in making this move, as I had suddenly noticed that matters were far from clear.



19...♘d6

I was far more concerned about 19...♕b7!, after which I intended 20.♗c4 (20.♗xd7 ♘b6! did not look great at all) 20...♕xb2 21.♗b3 ♖b7 22.♕a5 with prospects of a dangerous kingside attack. However, I will be the first to confess that it is not conclusive.

20.♗xd7 ♖xb2 21.♗c6 ♖fb8 22.a3



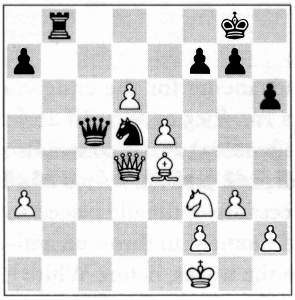
22...♖b1?!

Obvious, but the back rank attack leads nowhere. Far more tenacious was 22...♘b5! bringing the knight into play. After the continuation 23.d5 ♕f4! it is anyone's guess who stands better.

23.g3!

Slowly reasserting my grip on the position.

23...h6 24.e5 ♘f5 25.♗e4 ♖xf1+ 26.♔xf1 ♘e7 27.d5 ♕c5 28.d6 ♘d5 29.♕d4



The supported d-pawn is so powerful that White can welcome an exchange of queens. My biggest, and indeed only, danger now was that I would blunder under the stupid gens una sumus time control.

29...♕b5+ 30.♔g2 ♘b6 31.♘e1

Aiming for c5.

31...♕a5 32.♘d3 ♕xa3 33.♘c5

The deadly e6 now beckons.

33...♖c8 34.d7 ♘xd7

34...♖d8 35.♗c6 changes nothing.

35.♘xd7 ♕c3 36.♕xa7

And with this pawn goes the last vestige of resistance.

36...♕d2 37.♕b7 ♖d8 38.♗c6 ♕e2 39.h4 h5 40.♗e4 ♕d2 41.♗d5

Black resigned.

* * *

My winning path continued until Round 8 when I ran into serious trouble against Sandipan Chanda after misplaying the transition to a middle game from a Bogo-Indian. In a position of mounting superiority and rising tension, my scarf-clad opponent unwisely sacrificed a piece. Espying a welcome escape route, I overlooked an opportunity to turn the tables completely, instead steering the position towards a draw. The surprising upshot of this round was that, for the first time, I broke clear of my 'limpet', M.M.Venkatesh, who unexpectedly succumbed to Subbaraman Vijayalakshmi. The 27-year-old, who is somewhat overshadowed by her compatriot, Humpy Koneru, displayed great determination and vigour. She was most unfortunate not to collect the Commonwealth Women's title: by losing her last two games – to myself and Neelotpal Das (from a position of strength) – she allowed Harika Dronavalli to squeak past her.

I entered the last round with a massive 8/9 but with victory still to be earned. Not only was I Black against Surya Ganguly, who had clawed his way back from a disappointing mid-tournament defeat, but two players, no less – Venkatesh and Sandipan Chanda – were a mere half a point behind. Here is the crucial clash.

NOTES BY

Nigel Short

RL 8.7 – C68

Surya Ganguly

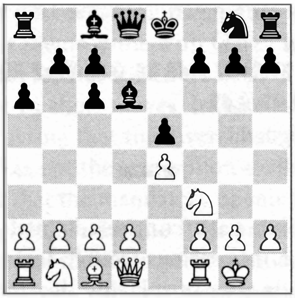
Nigel Short

Mumbai 2006 (10)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗xc6

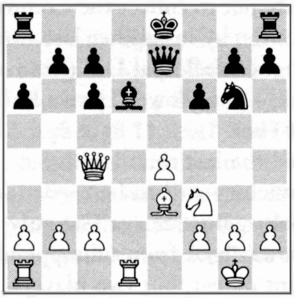
Now I understood the plot: I was to be Jose Raul Capablanca to Ganguly's Emanuel Lasker. Well, no thank you very much: I had not the slightest intention of submitting supinely to the hackneyed script.

4...dxc6 5.0-0 ♗d6



I picked this one up from David Howell who had drawn my attention to its popularity in English chess circles. In particular, the veteran grandmaster Mark Hebden has demonstrated in recent years the viability of this most primitive of defences of the e5 pawn. It seemed an eminently suitable choice against Ganguly, who is no Exchange Spanish expert, as it had never before featured in my repertoire.

6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 f6 8.♗e3 ♘e7 9.♘bd2 ♗e6 10.♖fd1 ♘g6 11.♘c4 ♗xc4 12.♕xc4 ♕e7

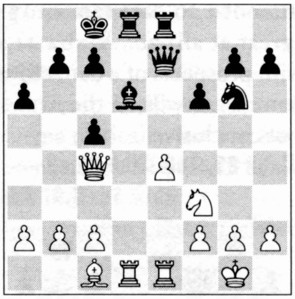


A standard position. Black has been compelled to hand back one of his bishops and he remains with doubled c-pawns – a losing disadvantage, as we know, if ever we reach a king and pawn endgame. That said, he is not without his prospects: the white e-pawn is particularly vulnerable and can only be protected at some inconvenience. While the statistics may favour White, the dynamics are certainly in Black's favour and thus an evaluation of approximate equality is in order.

13.♖e1

After prolonged thought. It was clear that Surya would have preferred a more active plan, but he could not find one.

13...0-0-0 14.♖ad1 ♖he8 15.♗c1 c5

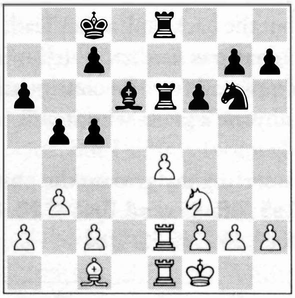


An ungainly choice, restricting my own bishop, but I wanted to cut out ♘d4-f5 altogether.

16.b3 ♕e6

Bringing the dreaded king and pawn endgame closer, but also intensifying pressure against e4.

17.♕xe6+ ♖xe6 18.♖d2 b5 19.♔f1 ♖de8 20.♖de2

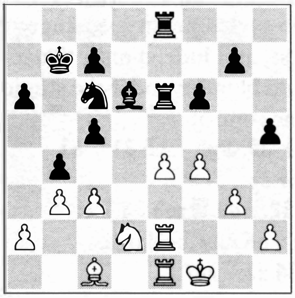


20...♔b7

Vaguely advancing for the endgame, but the immediate 20...♘e5 21.♘h4 (if 21.♘xe5 ♗xe5 threatening ...♗c3) 21...♘c6 was also possible.

21.g3 h5 22.♘d2 ♘e5 23.f4 ♘c6 24.c3 b4!?

Black's pieces are optimally placed so it seemed like a good moment to throw an anti-positional spanner in the works, before White has time to co-ordinate his clumsy forces.



25.c4?!

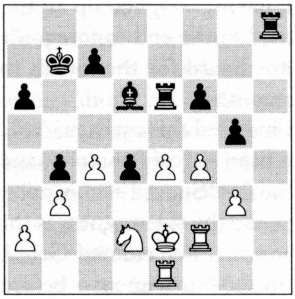
I had expected 25.♗b2 bxc3 26.♗xc3 ♘d4 27.♖f2 (27.♗xd4 cxd4 invites a subsequent ...♗b4) although after 27...g5 it is still very hard for White to untangle his position.

25...♘d4 26.♖f2 g5 27.♗b2 h4 28.♗xd4 cxd4 29.♔e2

Surya and I evaluated the position somewhat differently here. Of course I understood that a knight versus bishop endgame would be at best unpleasant, if not downright lost for Black, but the presence of rooks makes a dramatic difference, as they combine well with the bishop for an attack.

This misplaced feeling, that White should be better somehow, but not seeing exactly how to achieve it, combined with impending time-trouble, was what prompted White's abrupt collapse.

29...hxg3 30.hxg3 ♖h8

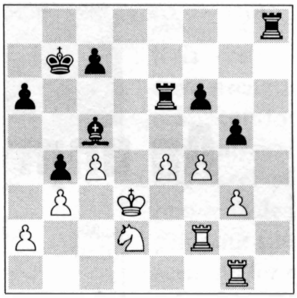


31.♖g1?

A blunder. Ganguly had considered the blockading sacrifice 31.e5 gxf4 32.gxf4 fxe5 33.f5 ♖eh6 34.♘e4 but rejected it because he did not really see why White should be better (he isn't). Nevertheless it was a fairly safe option, and in my view the best available.

31...d3+! 32.♔xd3 ♗c5

Shaking his head at this unpleasant turn, my opponent committed an even grosser error.



33.♖ff1?? ♖d6+

A rook is lost to the coming ♖h2. White resigned.

■□■

While the tournament (sponsored by ONGC, LIC and MTNL) was a personal triumph to me as a player, I cannot help feeling as CCA President that significant reforms ought to be made to enhance the event's success in the future. In particular, there should be a stipulated minimum rating and separate junior tournaments to guarantee its exclusivity. Otherwise it is inevitable that participants from the host nation will swamp the event and make the obtaining of title norms well-nigh an impossibility.

Alexander Morozevich is one of the generation of GMs, who have played their entire careers in the New In Chess years. He is also probably the most mercurial of that generation – brilliant, but unpredictable. When he is good, he is phenomenal, capable of winning game after game, even against super-strong GMs. The 2007 Russian Super-Final, where he won six games in a row, was an example of 'Moro' at his best.

An unpredictable genius

Evgeny Atarov

What epithet would you pick if you had to describe the new Russian champion, Alexander Morozevich? Brilliant, explosive – that goes without saying. Talented – there's no doubt about it. Erratic – yes, this peccadillo dogs him. But all this is the veneer. The most important quality that defines Sasha is his unpredictability. You never know in advance what to expect from him!

This time – and this became the main peculiarity of the 60th Russian Championship – the whole tournament was saturated with the spirit of unpredictability, making it one of the most outstanding episodes and absolutely unforgettable events of 2007. Everything in it unfolded completely differently from what was forecast: the unexpected early collapse of the favourites, the confident progression of the 20-year-old nihilists, the fantastic streak by the future winner, the Brownian motion in the camp of those who were catching up, and, finally, the intrigue that didn't abate until the very last moment.

But above all – the fantastic (55 percent) decisiveness and the entertainment value of the games. Although, one wonders, where did this come from? Before the start of the tournament almost half of its participants had come close to their limit: Svidler, Morozevich, Grischuk and Yakovenko had been through Mexico (the last as Grischuk's second), the European Club and Team Championships, and to cap it all, the World Cup. Besides them, Inarkiev, Tomashevsky, Vitiugov, Sakaev and Alekseev also played in Khanty-Mansiysk. True, last year's champion, having weighed up all the pros and cons, decided in the end to forego the thrill of sitting at the board for the fourth time in the past three months.

So what inspired this carnage? Yes, there was a big prize fund – over $200,000, and the winner, as in the first Super Final in 2004, received around $50,000 (by the way, it was this particular condition that determined Grischuk's participation in the tournament – before this he'd ignored the Super Final for two years). Yes, as never before, the confrontation between youth and experience was overt (2005 is remembered as clearly slanted in favour of experience, while in 2006 a sort of kindergarten emerged, with their 'teacher' Svidler being run off his feet) – thanks to the highest league in Krasnoyarsk, which has produced an entire stratum of fresh young grandmasters. But, probably, the most important thing was the introduction to the tournament of the 'Sofia' or similar anti-draw rules. In principle the players couldn't even offer each other a draw independently – the chief arbiter had to do this, and it was up to him to decide whether the position was playable or not...

And if the players turned to him only a couple of times in two weeks, the *de facto* ban on short draws and the lack of opportunity to kill the game by mutual agreement certainly helped the fighting chess players to continue the bat-

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Being struck on the head by a piece of stucco from the ceiling transformed Morozevich's tournament.

tle to the last ounce of their resources. No, the spectators didn't see bare kings on an empty board, but they didn't need to, either!

The number of spectators, by the way, was much larger than might have been expected. In the early rounds, satiated with chess activity (don't forget that not long before this the Tal Memorial and the tremendous World Blitz Championship were held in Moscow), the public reluctantly settled into the halls of the Central Chess Club. But when the first blood of the favourites was spilled, when the struggle to utter exhaustion began, an apple couldn't have found a place to fall in the chess club. The wave of fans was still rolling in when the games started, at two-thirty in the afternoon, and the staunchest of them left for home after ten, late at night.

There was a reason for this. Imagine: in the very first round Rychagov, little known to the public outside of Moscow, at 29 having become a grandmaster only a few years before and worked for a long time as a children's coach, as Black 'without chances' outplays Svidler. Morozevich energetically strives for a winning position against Yakovenko, and then at an equal point naturally blunders a piece and... doesn't lose! Amonatov quickly puts the holder of the Russian Cup, Timofeev, into an impasse, and near the end he beautifully sacrifices his queen and mates the king in the centre of the board.

Later – more. The unimaginable chaos of the results, dooming to failure any attempts to make predictions even one round ahead, based on the usual criteria – ratings, comparative strength, the players' 'comfort zones', their physical condition and level of preparation – made it the most gripping spectacle I've seen. As for naming the winner...

Before the start this is how I assessed Morozevich. He missed the World Cup (according to him, he just didn't see the point – if he won, there wouldn't be any match with Topalov, of course), and then he had more time for rest and preparation. Furthermore, his main opponent, in my estimation, Svidler, for some reason never had any 'romance' with the Super Final: before this Petya five times (out of five!) took first place or shared it in Russian Championships, but here in three years he hasn't once been able even to catch hold of the bronze.

And where was I with my prognoses, when after the fiasco in the game with Yakovenko, Morozevich lost in the second round to Vitiugov and settled at the bottom. It wasn't even the fact that Sasha *lost*, but *how* he did this! He lost disgracefully – you can't choose any other words for it!

'I played as if I'd just been through some kind of horrible illness', Morozevich recalled, 'and I was still feeling so bad that all my pieces were moving backwards instead of forwards. The knight doesn't go to d5 from c3, but to a2 – fortunately not to b1 – the queen doesn't go from d2 any closer to the black king, but to c1, closer to her own, and so on. It would've been OK if I'd been lazy or time-wasting – I'd say, I'm doing something with Vitiugov, at least I'm playing it out. What really finished me off – I prepared all this at home! I sat at the computer for about three hours, only there everything went right for me! I just got scared, I didn't understand what was happening – perhaps I should call a doctor? Then I didn't resign for a long time...'

It was hard to look Sasha in the eye. He almost never got up from the board, he sat there with an aloof expression, staring at one spot and unhurriedly twisting a strand of hair around his finger. 'Before the start of the third game Bakh *(the executive director of the Russian Chess Federation – E.A.)* asked me to go to the cash-desk', Morozevich continues, 'Here I couldn't resist and I asked, "Perhaps it'd be better for me to go there instead of playing the game?" This was already a total clinic. I thought that if it didn't work out in the game with Tomashevsky, I'd have to take Bakh's advice.'

This game became for him, if not critical ('It's important that Zhenya doesn't guess that this meeting of ours is the secret match ball!'), then it allowed him to believe in himself. Although it had something in common with the duel against Vitiugov, the content was far more important than the result. Finding himself in an unpleasant position after the opening, Morozevich did what few would have the strength to do: he harassed his opponent with such virtuosity with the necessity of repelling real or fake threats on every move, that Tomashevsky, who was clearly logical and always persistent in every other game of the championship, slipped up at an equal point – and as a result he lost.

'I still conducted the next game against Rychagov in a vague manner, which was beneath contempt. Nevertheless, I somehow managed to get through the first time control, Andrey got up from the board, I started to think, and here... a piece of stucco fell down from the ceiling onto my head! I can't say that it stunned me or anything like that, but it seemed to me that it was some kind of sign from above.

'After I'd somehow dusted off myself and the board, my opponent started to blunder literally on every move! What's more, I can't say that the position was fantastically complicated, or Rychagov was feeling some kind of time pressure. Literally: move – blunder, move – blunder...'

Looking at what took place on the board in these several moves after the time control, Morozevich smiled infectiously, as if he himself couldn't quite believe in the reality of what had happened to him. This was already a completely different person. Then I thought – now it will begin!

And it began... he threw out Sakaev like a worn-out piece of furniture, then he smothered Timofeev, who was exhausted from defeats (this became his fifth out of six encounters), and then – Grischuk and Svidler. These two had already had their fill, as they say. I'm almost certain: it never occurred to Morozevich to set any records, never mind defeat all his opponents, especially not these two. Sasha just came to each game and posed problems. As White, as Black – it didn't make any difference. 'Yes, I was obviously lucky when Grischuk, then Svidler, didn't notice some of the not-so-complicated things', the victor justified himself. 'On another day, I expect they would have noticed all this!' But you can't take words out of a song.

Six wins in a row! No one in their peak years ever achieved such a thing in the national championship: neither Botvinnik, nor Tal, nor Kasparov. True, the last of those also went for the record in 2004, but having overcome Dreev, Tseshkovsky, Svidler and Timofeev one after the other, Garry stopped at number four. Moreover, it was Morozevich who didn't let him win the fifth in a row.

A crowd of spectators was standing around his board during the game with Dreev. They all wanted the miracle to continue. But a seventh in a row (a repeat of Kasparov's achievement at Wijk aan Zee in 1999) didn't happen. 'You also have to survive too much happiness! I completely lost my objectivity in that game, and the anti-draw laws didn't allow me to go for plain sailing.' But by losing, Sasha completely unexpectedly revived the intrigue. Six wins are six wins, but we couldn't forget how Morozevich started the tournament, and his opponents weren't dozing at this point either. Tomashevsky was only half a point behind and Grischuk – one point. A round later they exchanged places, and the other Sasha kept trying to take out his older namesake right to the very end, somewhere in the middle of his game with Svidler in the last round. But he couldn't...

The silver was a fully-deserved reward for Grischuk's persistence, which he displayed in what was far from the best situation for him: how many nerves did the wins over Timofeev and Rychagov cost him? Then, the form (psychological, chess and so on) Sasha was in after Mexico was shown best by the game with Morozevich, and before this – the completely distinct Crete and the World Cup. He's about the only unsuccessful participant in the World Championship who still hasn't once 'broken through' with some memorable victory.

I want to talk about Tomashevsky separately. At 20 this kid from Saratov is already a regular at the Super Finals – Zhenya didn't play only in the very first one. In 2005 his debut wasn't that impressive: one win and he shared second-to-last place with Volkov. In 2006 he was already in the top half, and he lost only to the two first prize-winners. And now...

To be honest, until this summer I wasn't very familiar with his work. He'd left me only with an inexplicable feeling of unbearable dryness, completely uncharacteristic of the guys of his age – kind of an 'early Leko', nothing more. His positional mastery also broke down at times, which was evident from his numerous finishes outside the prizes and not a single victory in all the possible junior championships, of the world and of Russia. You're probably quite familiar with the names of his more successful opponents of the same age. But look for them: where are Megalashvili, Belash, Khairullin, Grachev – and where's Tomashevsky!

'I was even staggered myself that I made a showing in this Super Final', the bronze prize-winner confided. 'There were no obvious failures – even in the games that I lost, I understood what I'd done wrong, at which point the game had gone off the rails – and in my winning encounters I completely controlled the situation, I chose the most convenient course of events for myself. At last, wholeness and completeness appeared in my play. For this and for everything else I particularly want to thank Yury Sergeevich Razuvaev, without whose help none of this would have happened.'

Razuvaev himself was also delighted about the partnership: 'He's a very serious boy. He's bright and gets top marks. It's always pleasant for a teacher when the seeds of knowledge are sown on fertile soil... If he continues in this same direction, remember my words, Tomashevsky will go far!'

He's unhurried, careful, lethally logical, and what's especially important in such temperaments – a piercing force has arisen in him. He has the rest of it: after his commentary a good half of the hall was left with the impression – this guy knows everything there is to know about chess. Something similar happens after appearances by Kramnik or... Leko, but today's Leko.

With the exception of these three there wasn't really anyone who could count this tournament as an asset to himself. Perhaps Dreev, who found himself with the status of oldest participant, and was able to prove that it's still far too early to count him out. This was certainly needed: flying out from the start with 'minus two' and having to scramble, playing a few genuinely classy games, stopping the leader, who up until then had crushed everyone one after another, but at the very end, out of an inordinate desire to get into the top three, 'going too far' (in the game against Sakaev) and destroying the dream. Oh, what a comeback collapsed... Who else? Perhaps Inarkiev, who gained his first win later than anyone else, in the ninth round. Or Yakovenko, who spent the whole journey studying the calendar in reverse: how many days were left until the end. Probably Sakaev, who only lifted himself up from the bottom thanks to unbelievable strength of will.

Vitiugov will definitely remember the championship for his disappointing finish. Nikita (Tomashevsky's best friend and contemporary) invested so much desire and energy into his performance, but he didn't have enough strength. And his wonderful creative wins alternated about 50-50 with failures. In this, however, there's nothing terrible – the 20-year-old Petersburger, who's decided to focus seriously on his chess career and now regularly works with Grandmaster Makarov, is still following Zhenya's timetable. In the first year, a minus score, but not last place, and in the second year, he got half-way. What will happen in the third year – we'll see, first he has to make it there!

Hope after a successful start was replaced with total twilight at the finish for Amonatov and Rychagov: neither the one nor the other has ever played in such intense tournaments, where every game is a blueprint for survival. But Timofeev, without doubt, will do whatever's possible to purge all images of Moscow in December from his memory as quickly as he can.

It seems I've forgotten someone. Ah... Svidler! But hold on – did you actually see him at the Super Final? Yes, I remember, he played two beautiful games – with Dreev and Vitiugov, sacrificing a rook in each of them. But then some man who was very similar to Peter Veniaminovich played the remaining nine games for him. Is it worth revealing his hidden identity?!

NOTES BY

Alexander Morozevich

RE 14.2 – A09
Evgeny Tomashevsky
Alexander Morozevich
Moscow Super Final 2007 (3)

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3 c5 4.e3

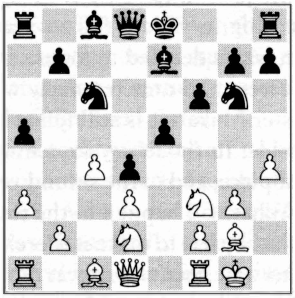
In 2003 in the Russian Championship in Krasnoyarsk, in the last round Vladimir Malakhov and I played the following game: 4.b4 cxb4 5.a3 f6 6.axb4 e5 7.♕a4+ ♗d7 8.b5 ♘a6 9.d3, and here, to the surprise of ourselves and the spectators we agreed a draw. Despite the fact that, in my view, the concluding position is in favour of White, in the present game my opponent decided to play differently.

4...♘c6 5.exd4 cxd4 6.♗g2 e5 7.0-0

Making use of his extra tempo, White does not hurry with d2-d3, but quickly castles and speculates on an early b2-b4, even with his pawn on d2.

7...f6 8.d3 ♘ge7 9.a3 a5 10.♘bd2 ♘g6 11.h4 ♗e7

For the moment this is all logical, with the two sides making 'their' moves.



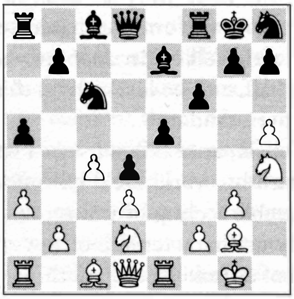
12.♖e1

In view of my limited experience of playing such positions at the board, this move seemed questionable to me. After, say, h5 and ♘h4 or h5 and ♘h2, White's plan is to play f4, and for this it is unclear where the rook will be better placed – on e1 or f1. My opponent was kind enough to explain it all to me after the game – ♖e1 is a typical move, attacking the e5-pawn; White hinders the move f6-f5 and wins the battle for the f5-square. He is an expert, he knows more about it.

12...0-0

Another interesting possibility is 12...♘f8, followed by the manoeuvre of this knight to c5.

13.h5 ♘h8 14.♘h4



14...g5!

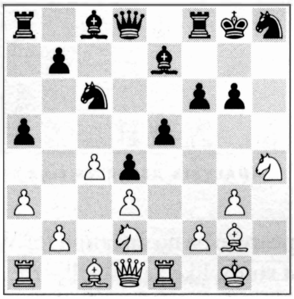
While recognizing the danger of such an advance in front of my king, after a long think I nevertheless decided to launch a close-range fight for space and the f5-square.

After the routine and more solid 14...♗e6, at the cost of a pawn White would have maintained an enduring initiative: 15.♗d5!? (also after 15. f4 ♕d7 16.f5 ♗xf5 17.♘xf5 ♕xf5 18.♖f1 ♕d7 White has good compensation, of the 'enduring' category) 15...♗xd5 16.cxd5 ♕xd5 17.♘f5 ♘f7 18.♕g4 ♘g5 19.♘e4 ♗d8 20.f4 ♘e6 21.♗d2. Even here the deft computer continues seeking possibilities for Black, although it would clearly be difficult to decide on this at the board, and also it is significantly easier playing White.

15.hxg6

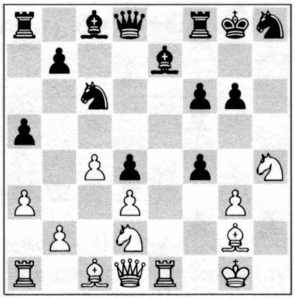
White lacks the resources to give mate after 15. ♗d5+ ♔g7 16.h6+ (16.♘df3 ♘f7; 16.♘g2 ♘f7 17.g4 ♘h6 18.f3 f5) 16...♔xh6 17.♔g2 gxh4 18. ♘f3+ (18.♘e4+ ♔g7 19.♕h5 h3+! and then 20...♘f7 clearly favours Black) 18...♔g7 19. ♘xh4 ♘f7 (if 19...♘g6 20.♖h1 with compensation) 20.♖h1 ♕e8 21.♗e4 (after the clever 21.♕f3 Black has the no less clever 21...♕d7!) 21...♖h8 22.♕h5 (22.♘f5+ ♗xf5 23.♗xf5 h6 is better for Black) 22...♘g5 23.♘f5+ ♗xf5 24.♕h6+ ♔f7 25.♗xf5 ♗f8, and Black successfully defends.

15...hxg6



16.♗e4?!

My opponent made this move quite quickly, possibly reckoning that Black's 14th move had been unjustifiably audacious. Meanwhile, the position is more complicated than it appears ☺ and Black has many resources. Initially even my Rybka opts clearly for ♗e4, and only after serious thought does it begin to give preference to 16.f4 and the total chaos arising there. After 16.f4 (16.♗d5+ ♔g7 17.♔g2 ♘f7 is not dangerous) Black is forced to capture: 16...exf4 (bad are both 16..a.♔g7 17.f5!, and 16...f5 17.♗d5+ ♔g7 18.♘df3 exf4 19.♗xf4 ♗f6 20.♕d2 ♘f7 21.♗xf7 ♔xf7 22.♘g5+ ♔g7 23.♖e6!), after which White has various possibilities:



A) 17.♗d5+ ♔g7 18.♘df3 fxg3! 19.♕d2 g5 20.♖e6 f5 (20...♗xe6 is also possible) 21.♖xe7+ ♕xe7 22.♕xg5+ ♕xg5 23.♗xg5 f4 with advantage to Black;

B) 17.gxf4 f5 18.♗d5+ ♔g7 19.♘hf3 ♗f6 (after 19...♘f7 20.♘b3!? ♘h6 21.♘bxd4 I have no idea what is happening) 20.♘e5 ♗xe5 21. fxe5 ♕g5+ (or 21...f4) with a complicated, irrational position;

C) 17.♕e2!? (during the game this move appeared to be the most unpleasant) 17...♗d6! (17...♖f7 18.♗d5 g5 19.gxf4 gxh4 20.♕h5 with attacking chances; 17...g5 18.♗d5+ ♔g7 19.♗xc6 and White is better; 17...fxg3? 18. ♗xc6 and wins) 18.♘e4 (18.c5!? is even possible: 18...♗c7 – 18...♗xc5 19.♘e4 ♗e7 20. gxf4 with compensation – 19.♘c4 fxg3 is unclear; the check on d5 leads to similar positions as ♘e4; 18.♗d5+ ♔g7 19.♘e4 fxg3 20. ♘xd6 – the bishop cannot be allowed to go to e5 – 20...♕xd6 21.♕f3 – here Black chooses between 21...♘e5, 21...g5 and 21...♕d7; nowhere is the position clear) 18...fxg3 19.♘xd6 (the dashing 19.♘xg6 is parried by 19...♘xg6 20.♕h5 ♘ce5 21.♘xd6 ♕xd6 22.♗d5+ ♗e6 and Black is better) 19...♕xd6 20.♕f3 ♔g7 (20...g5 21.♕h5 ♘e5 22.♗xg5!) 21.♗f4 ♕d7 22.♖e4! (otherwise 22...♕g4) 22...g5 23.♕xg3 ♘f7 24.♖f1, and here at its maximum depth the computer gives a slight preference to White after 24...♕g4 25.♕xg4 ♗xg4 26.♗xg5 ♘fe5 27. ♗f4 ♖ad8. With the move in the game White provokes f5 and wins the e5-pawn, but concedes the initiative for a long time.

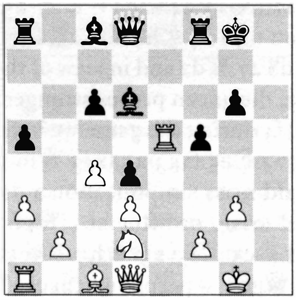
16...f5 17.♗xc6

After 17.♗d5+ ♔g7 18.♘hf3 ♗f6 19.♗xc6 bxc6 20.♘xe5 ♗xe5 21.♖xe5 ♘f7, intending e5, ♗b7 and ♖h8, Black has a strong initiative.

17...bxc6 18.♘hf3 ♘f7

Black also has an excellent game after 18...e4 19. dxe4 f4 with the approximate variation 20.gxf4 ♖xf4 21.♘f1 ♖g4+ 22.♘g3 c5 23.♔g2 ♘f7, but the move in the game is no worse.

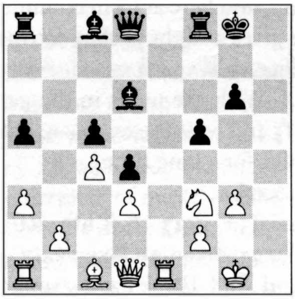
19.♘xe5 ♘xe5 20.♖xe5 ♗d6



21.♖e1?!

On this move, which many super-grandmasters would have made quickly to gain time on the clock, my opponent thought for 6 minutes. Anticipation of the future? Collapse of judgement? In any event, objectively the non-trivial exchange sacrifice 21.♘f3 would probably not have fully equalized the position, but would have given a mass of practical chances. For example: 21...♗xe5 (21...f4 22.♗xf4 ♗g4 23.♖g5) 22.♘xe5 ♕f6 (22...c5 23.♘xg6 ♖f7 24.♗f4 ♗b7 25.♘h4 with chances for both sides, but slightly more for Black; 22...♕d6!? 23.♗f4 c5 – 23...g5? 24.♘f7 – 24.♕f3 ♖a6 with an edge for Black) 23.f4 c5 24.♕f3 ♖a7 25.♕d5+ ♕e6 26.♗d2! when the position is quite double-edged, and there is no question of a quick mate. After 21.♖e1?! against correct play by Black it is more difficult, if at all possible, to extinguish his activity.

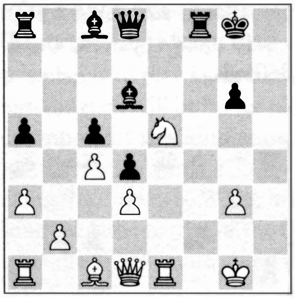
21...c5 22.♘f3



22...♔g7??

Black shows an amazing lack of urgency in such a dynamic position where every tempo counts. It is hard to think of a stronger and more natural move than 22...f4, especially since the following line does not work: 22...♗b7 23.♖e6 ♔g7 (if 23...♔f7 24.♘g5+ ♔g7 25.♗f4 and White is on top) 24.♘h4 ♖f6 25.♗g5 ♖xe6 26.♗xd8 ♖xd8 27.♕d2 and in view of the insecure black king, the queen proves stronger.

After 22...f4 during the game we both assumed that after 23.♘e5 fxg3 24.fxg3 ♕f6 25.♗f4 g5 26.♘g4 and mass simplification a drawn ending would arise, or after 26...♕g6 27.♗xd6 ♕xd6 28.♘e5 ♖f5 29.♕h5 ♖xe5 30.♖xe5 ♕xe5 31.♕g6+ – perpetual check. The move 24...♕f6 looked so natural, that I did not think about any alternative, although to find a stronger continuation and accurately calculate it was not easy.



ANALYSIS AFTER 24.fxg3

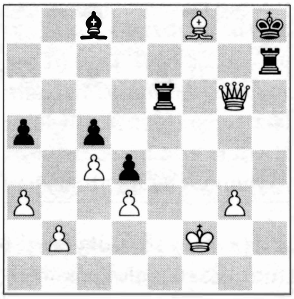
There appears to be no salvation for White after the almost study-like 24...♖a7!! – the switching of the rook to h7 and ♗b7 is threatened, and the variations show that there is no adequate defence:

A) 25.♕e2 ♖h7 26.♕e4 ♗b7 27.♕xg6+ ♔h8 and wins;

B) 25.♘c6 ♕d7 intending 26.♘xa7 ♕h3;

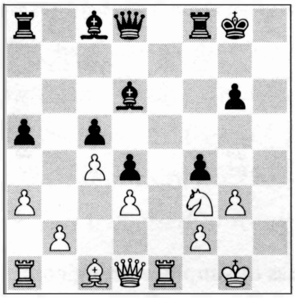
C) 25.♗f4 ♖h7 26.♕f3 ♗b7 27.♕g4 g5!;

D) 25.♗h6 (the most tenacious) 25...♖f5! (another move that is difficult to find; for the moment the direct attempt does not work – 25...♖h7 26.♗xf8 ♗b7 27.♕g4 and there is only perpetual check, or 25...♗xe5 26.♖xe5 ♖h7 27.♗xf8 ♗b7 28.♖e4=) 26.♕g4 (26.♘c6 ♕f6 27.♘xa7 ♗xg3 28.♕e2 – 28.♘xc8 ♕h4 and wins – 28...♗f2+ 29.♕xf2 ♖xf2 30.♖e8+ ♔h7 31.♖f8 ♖g2+! 32.♔xg2 ♗b7+ and it's all over) 26...♗xe5 27.♕xg6+ ♔h8 28.♖xe5 ♖xe5 29.♖f1 ♖h7! 30.♖f8+ ♕xf8 31.♗xf8 ♖e1+ 32.♔f2 ♖e6,



and Black has trapped the queen!

Returning to 22...f4, it should be mentioned that the best defence is the ultra-quiet 23.♕e2! (23.♗xf4 ♗xf4 24.gxf4 ♖xf4 25.♖e4 ♕f6 26.♖xf4 ♕xf4 is better for Black). After analysis (it is extremely difficult to demonstrate anything to the resourceful computer ☺) it transpired that here too there is an almost study-like way to win:



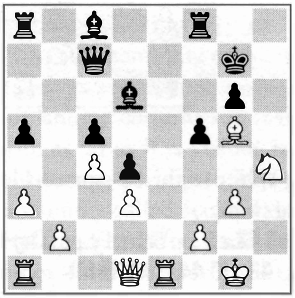
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

23...fxg3 24.fxg3 ♗xg3! 25.♗h6 (if 25.♗g5 ♕c7 and Black is better) and now the crucial move 25...♗f4!! 26.♗xf8 (or 26.♗xf4 ♖xf4 27.♘h2 ♗f5 and wins; 26.♕e4 ♗xh6 27.♕xa8 ♕d7! 28.♕e4 ♕h3 and wins) 26...♗e3+ 27.♔h1 ♕xf8 28.♖g1, when after both 28...♔g7 and 28...♖a6 White's position makes a painful impression.

23.♗g5!

Thank you, my friend!

23...♕c7 24.♘h4

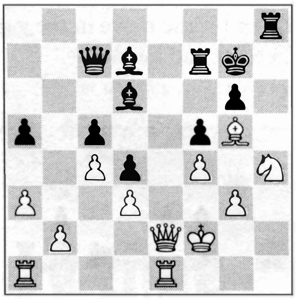


At this moment the game entered its rapid phase, and for an understanding of what we did next, I will give a brief summary – White chose 'solid' moves, time after time rejecting the necessary and advantageous opening of a second front after b2-b4. Black, not recognizing the danger of this advance, stubbornly avoided playing a5-a4, and concentrated his forces closer to the white king, hoping, when the game switched to its blitz phase, to give mate. Generally speaking, I did not take fright, and my opponent 'trusted' me. Already here 24.b4 was quite appropriate: 24...♗b7! 25.bxc5 ♗xc5! intending 26.♖b1 ♖ae8 with counterplay.

24...♖f7 25.♕e2

If White wanted to play f4, it would have been better to do this immediately.

25...♗d7 26.f4 ♖h8 (26...a4) **27.♔f2** (27.b4!)

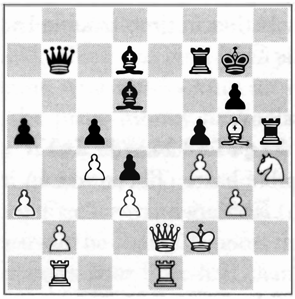


27...♕b7

Fighting against ♖h1, and seemingly at the same time against b4. 27...♖xh4 28.♗xh4 ♗xf4 29.gxf4 ♕xf4+ 30.♔g1 ♕xh4 31.♕h2 ♕xh2+ 32.♔xh2 ♔f6 and the position is rather to Black's advantage. After 27...a4 White regroups: 28.♖h1 ♖ff8 29.♖ae1.

28.♖ab1 ♖h5?

Black sees only his own threats. It was now essential to play 28...a4! 29.b4 axb3 30.♕d1 ♕c8 31.♕xb3 ♗c6 with an unclear position.



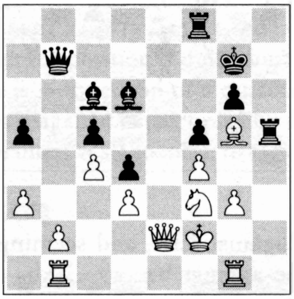
29.♘f3?

Caution grows into panic. After 29.b4 axb4 (29...♖xg5? 30.bxc5; 29...cxb4 30.c5 ♗c7 31.axb4 ♖xg5 32.bxa5 ♕d5 33.fxg5 f4 34.♖b6! fxg3+ 35.♔g1 favours White) 30.axb4 cxb4 31.c5 ♗c7 32.♕b2 (32.♕a2 ♖xg5 33.fxg5 ♕b8 is messy) 32...♕d5 33.♕b3! ♕xc5 (33...♗c6 34.♕xd5 ♗xd5 35.♖xb4 ♗a5 36.♖xd4 ♗xe1+ 37.♔xe1 and White is better) 34.♖ec1 ♕d6 35.♕xb4 ♕xb4 36.♖xb4 the ending is very unpleasant for Black.

29...♗c6 30.♖g1?

Evgeny saw the correct move 30.♗h4, but he judged the endgame after 30...♗xf4 31.gxf4 ♗xf3 32.♕xf3 ♖xh4 33.♕xb7 ♖xb7 to be lost. But it is not clear whether this is so – 34.♔g3 ♖g4+ 35.♔f3 ♔f6 36.b4 (even here!) 36...axb4 37.axb4 cxb4 38.♖a1 and it is not apparent how Black can win here. But after the move in the game things do indeed become bad for White.

30...♖f8



31.♘h4?

The last chance was 31.♖be1, although here too 31...♖e8 32.♕xe8 ♗xe8 33.♖xe8 ♕xb2+ 34.♖e2 ♕b3 35.♖ge1 (35.♗e7 ♗xe7 36.♖xe7+ ♔h6 37.♖ge1 ♕xd3 and after a rook move along the seventh rank Black wins by 38...♕c2+ 39.♖e2 d3!) 35...♕xd3 36.♖e6 ♗f8 37.♖xg6+ ♔h7 Black successfully defends. But it is very doubtful whether in time-trouble I would have chosen this ☺.

31...♖xg5

Now it is all over.

32.fxg5 f4 33.g4 ♖e8 34.♕d2 ♖e3

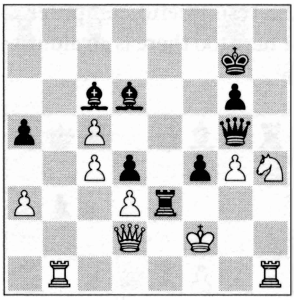
Time-trouble haste. There was an immediate win by 34...♖h8!.

35.b4

At last!

35...♕e7 36.bxc5 ♕xg5 37.♖h1

If 37.♘f5+ gxf5 38.gxf5 ♖g3.

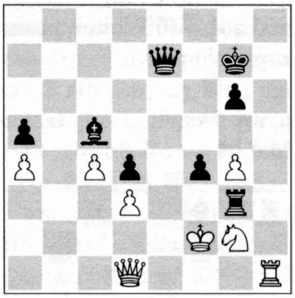


37...♗xh1?

Of the mass of simple winning continuations – 37...f3, 37...♗c7, 37...♗xc5 etc., Black chooses the 'longest'.

38.♖xh1 ♗xc5 39.♕d1 ♕e7 40.a4 ♖g3 41.♘g2

Realizing that there was altogether no point in making any further mistakes and prolonging the winning procedure, after a short breather I managed to compose myself and find a clear-cut way to win.



41...♗b4!

Depriving White of the e1-square. He is practically in zugzwang.

42.♖h2 ♕e5 43.c5 43.♕h1 f3 44.♖h7+ ♔g8 45.♘f4 ♖xg4. **43...f3 44.♘h4 ♕f4!**

Not wishing to suffer any more, White resigned. He does indeed have no moves which do not lead to major loss of material.

I was in the Press Room at the 2008 Wijk aan Zee tournament, when I heard the shocking news that Bobby Fischer had died. Such was Fischer's dislike of publicity that his friends had known better than to talk to the press about his health, with the result that few outside a close circle were aware that he had been suffering from serious kidney problems. The last few years of his turbulent life were spent in Iceland, the country with which his name will always be associated, thanks to his 1972 match with Spassky. A few weeks after his death, Dirk Jan travelled to Reykjavik, to track down the legend's last few years.

They'll do it every time

In the footsteps of Icelandic citizen Bobby Fischer

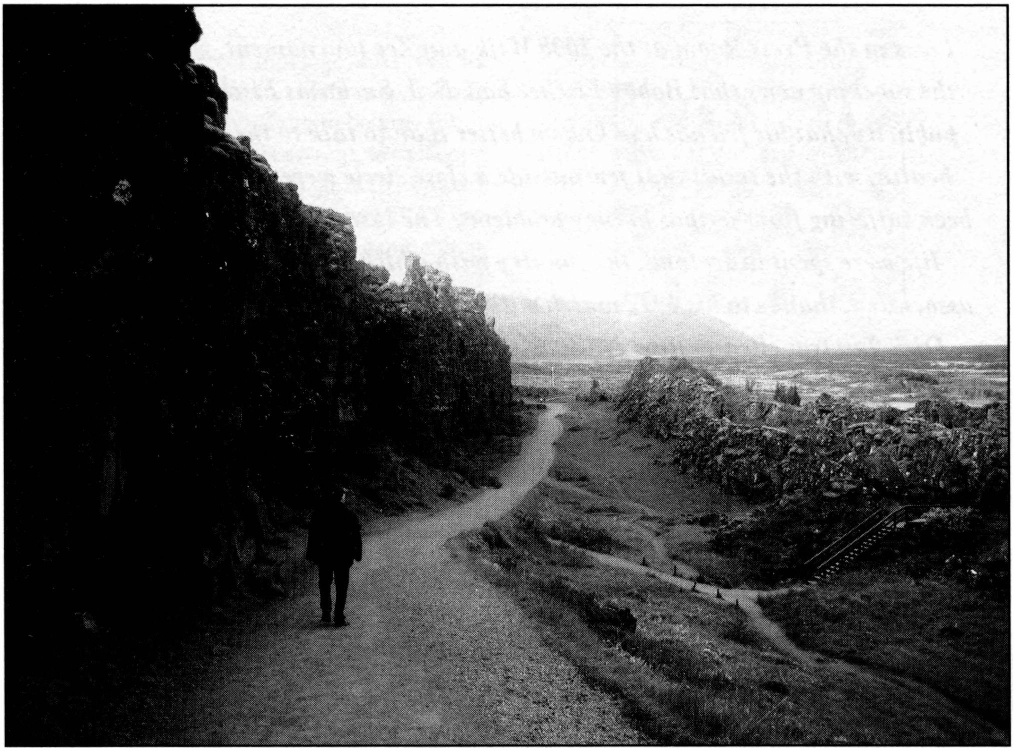
Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

'*Space is what we have here. Because it's a small community, people are conscious of giving you space.*' Kjartan Sveinsson of the Icelandic band Sigur Ros (in their film Heima)

At the gate the Boeing 737 of Icelandair stands literally trembling on its wheels and flapping its wings as the snow storm that complicated our landing continues to rage. Outside it, the world, as far as it is visible, is all white. Not a big surprise, perhaps, when you're arriving in a country called Iceland, but when I get off the plane, Einar Einarsson tells me that these weather conditions are pretty extreme and that in fact they have seen little snow in the past few winters. Einar has come to pick me up with his Chevrolet four-wheel-drive, and as he takes me to my hotel he explains that if he's ever going to sell the car he'll keep the passenger's seat. Quite a few strong grandmasters have sat in it, including three World Champions, Smyslov, Spassky and, of course, Bobby Fischer. Einar is a former President of the Icelandic Chess Federation and a member of the committee that managed to free Fischer from his Japanese jail and bring him to Iceland. When I told him that I had plans to come to Iceland on a Fischer pilgrimage, he urged me to come this weekend, as there will be an intimate memorial service at the Laugardaelir Church 60 kilometres outside Reykjavik. Here Fischer was secretly buried by his friend Gardar Sverrisson, the only member of the committee who was present at the burial.

I am staying at the Borg Hotel, the oldest hotel in Iceland, which was built in 1930 by a boxing champion who was looking for an investment for the prize-money he had won. The first chess World Champion to stay here was Alexander Alekhine, who visited the island in 1931. Bobby Fischer was a guest in 1961, when as an 18-year-old he changed rooms three times. Forty-four years later little had changed, Einar says. In September 2005 Fischer was looking for a big house to rent because his Filipino friend Marylin Ong and their daughter Jingy Ong were coming to visit Iceland. When they found a seemingly suitable place he went from bedroom to bedroom, lay down on the various beds and listened intently for traffic or other noises that might disturb him. In the end he rented the house, but only after Einar had told him that he wouldn't hear anything from the outside world if he turned on the radio.

After dropping off my suitcase we go for din-



Relaxing in Iceland in the summer of 2005. Bobby Fischer walks down the Almannagja rift in Thingvellir, one of the most popular Icelandic tourist sites. To his right are the remnants of the original Althing, the oldest parliament in the world, which was founded in 930.

ner. Carefully moving through the snow-covered streets, we head for the 3 Frakkar restaurant, where Fischer regularly went to eat. On the way Einar points at the wooden houses in the old part of Reykjavik, which the locals call 101 Reykjavik. For a while Fischer considered buying one of these houses, but he didn't like the windows, through which people might peep in. He also had his doubts about the solidity of the walls. In the apartment that he finally bought, only months before his death, he wanted a bulletproof door, which proved too expensive, and also asked for the criminal records of his neighbours, which he didn't get either. When he went to the 3 Frakkar restaurant, Fischer usually arrived a couple of minutes before three o'clock, when they closed for their afternoon break. Knowing his guest and his wish to avoid other customers, the chef didn't mind and served him. We take a seat at the table where Fischer preferred to sit and where his last photo was taken. The wall behind us is covered with paintings by local artists that are for sale, and nearer the ceiling is a big stuffed fish to show that this is a fish restaurant. Einar remembers that Fischer's physical condition was quite poor when he arrived from Japan. Whenever they went for a walk he was always looking for something to lean on, and if they went outside the city, he soon wondered if there were any benches. More than once he would stretch out somewhere and take a brief nap. In his last year Einar hardly saw him. The last time he had given him advice was in his conflict with the Swiss bank UBS, which no longer wanted him as a customer and transferred his money to Iceland. Fischer wanted to make his own decisions about his money and sent it back again. He was also angry that they had sold the gold he had invested in. Einar used to work for a bank and later was CEO of Visa Iceland for 20 years. Commenting on Fischer's conflict with the Swiss bank, he feels that they didn't treat him well.

With a smile Einar recalls that at least on three occasions Fischer claimed that he'd make an excellent Prime Minister for Iceland. Although he immediately added that, of course, he couldn't be bothered to show up in the Althing, the Icelandic parliament. In any case he displayed remarkable foresight in some Icelandic matters. As early as 1972 he suggested that they should get rid of the American airbase, which was suddenly closed a couple of years ago. At that time he also said that he didn't understand why they didn't increase their fishing zone from 50 to 200 miles, which also happened later. Einar grins when he says that Bobby also objected to the domestic airport close to the centre of Reykjavik because of the low flying planes. There are plans to close it down in the next five years.

When they spoke about his anti-Americanism, Fischer told Einar that he felt deceived by Brad Darrach, who wrote an insider's account of the match in 1972, *Bobby Fischer vs. The Rest of the World*. Fischer felt he had no right to do this and tried to sue Darrach, but his claim was dismissed. Ever since that time he felt that Americans could not be trusted if your country betrayed you in a matter of such principle.

The next day I have my first interview appointment in the afternoon, when I will see Magnus Skarphedinsson, the head of the Elf School, with whom Fischer liked to discuss supernatural phenomena. But before I go there I want to visit Bókin, the second-hand bookshop owned by Bragi Kristjonsson. Bókin, which means nothing else but The Book, is a booklover's dream, with long rows of bookcases and huge stacks of books everywhere. Bragi is not there, but his son is. He speaks with affection about their famous customer and shows the chair at the end of a small book alley at the far end of the shop, where Fischer would read and sometimes doze off. He liked biographies of celebrities and occasionally also asked for Nazi literature, but as he didn't read German this often made little sense. 'Do you think he was a Nazi?' asks Bragi's son, indicating with the tone of his question that he doesn't really think so. With a smile he recalls that one day Fischer arrived holding a letter from the United States and asked him to open it. From some distance he watched the letter being opened and said: 'It is poisoned. I'm absolutely sure it's poisoned.' The bookseller laughs. 'He was convinced that it was poisoned, but apparently he didn't mind that it would kill me.'

As he was mostly hidden in his back alley, other customers barely noticed him, but when they did he was friendly. Once an older lady approached him to sign a book and he courteously did so. Apparently, this lady knew how to handle him. As she left the shop, she said to Bragi's son that she had noticed how Fischer tried to be anonymous in the street, even if he didn't exactly succeed. Obviously he would not walk up and down the main street in the centre, Laugavegur, and neither would he choose the first parallel street. No, most of the time she saw him in the second parallel street.

In fact, the centre of Fischer's universe in the heart of Reykjavik was very small. From his apartment at Klapparstigur 5a to Bókin was only a minute's walk, and if he continued that walk for another 200 meters, he would reach Anaestu Grösum, his favourite vegetarian restaurant on the corner of Klapparstigur and Laugavegur. Here I have lunch before I take a taxi to the eastern part of Reykjavik where Magnus Skarphedinsson has his Alfaskolinn. In this school research is done on elves and other invisible beings that inhabit the island. From the heavily filled bookshelves in his office it is apparent that Magnus studies anything supernatural. Wherever you look there are gnomes and fairies in all sizes. Before I can ask my first question, Magnus baffles me with a question on his part. Quietly looking at me he asks, are you Jewish? Not knowing whether he is joking or not I decide to skip it and ask my own questions, to which he replies with care.

'The first time I saw Bobby Fischer was in 1972 at the world championship here in Laugardalsholl. He was a revolutionary in chess and I was one of the best chess players in my school. I ran into both Fischer and Spassky, and they gave me their signatures on the same envelope. I could not have imagined that I would ever see them again. But I did. Spassky two years ago, and Bobby when he moved to Iceland. We mostly met at Anaestu Grösum. I don't think he was a real vegetarian, but Bobby was very aware of health food. And when he was order-ing food it was, not this and not this, because he had opinions on everything. I had seen him often at the restaurant, but I didn't talk to him at first. That's what, he told me later, he liked about Icelandic people, that they left him alone. He would be there, eating alone, always with a plastic bag full of books and reading. One day, when we were the only two people in the restaurant, I called him and said hi. We started talking and he asked me what I was doing and I told him I was working in the field of supernatural phenomena. All kinds of supernatural things, UFOs, life and death. My main job is to collect the stories and experiences of Icelanders in this field. I am the leader of the spiritual organization in Iceland. That really fired him up and we talked for an hour. Every time we met there from then on, we would talk.

'He was amazingly well informed about many of these things. He had always read a new book about something I didn't know about. I thought I knew more than all others here, but he told me about new books, told me about theories and scientists, I really learned a lot from him. He had an incredible memory for dates, theories, scientists, everything. He was fascinated by UFOs and aliens and he once said to me, well, you never know for sure, but most likely these stories are true. He asked me many many things about all this. But (laughs), mixed up with these interests were these endless ideas and theories of conspiracies. About America and the Jews. That was part of his world view, *sein Weltbild*, as the Germans say. In some of the books he was reading he detected conspiracies. I told him that that was, of course, not right and that he should not see conspiracies in all this. I'm a historian. On the other hand, we quite often talked about the USA and here he showed enormous logic about what influence Jews had on American politics, and how they controlled their foreign policy. Some of these stories were very enlightening for me, as he obviously knew much more about this than me.

'Yes, I liked him. He was warm to me. It made me glad, his childish interest in all these things. With his bag of books and his iPod on which he recorded radio and television programs, which he sometimes wanted me to listen to. And he liked me. He told his best friend in Iceland, Gardar Sverrisson, who has been one of my best friends for decades, that he liked me. He always called me the 'out-of-space man'. But he lived in his own world. Sometimes I found him somewhere downtown and picked him up with my car and I'd drive him home, although he never told me where he lived. I knew, but he never told me. Where do you live Bobby? He never answered that question. And when I drove him home we just went into the direction of his home and he walked the rest.

'No, I never got into a fight with him. Once I almost did. I asked him about his beliefs. And his mother and family. That was almost an insult. He got angry and upset. He switched off and refused to listen to me. He got up, muttering, I must go now, see you later. But the next time we met it was OK. He never spoke about personal things.

'I think we both benefited from our talks. I learned a lot from him and he learned a lot from me. I am working in this society with very fragile people, shall we say, and I had never seen how fragile geniuses are. And how much they, partly at least, inhabit their own world. (Rapidly) Can you drive me here, Magnus? Can you drive me there? What do you think about this? Have you heard about that? Do you think it is true? My kids were crying in the back seat and he was totally in his own world (laughs). He always had 10 new questions about phenomena when we met, some of which I had heard and could tell him about. Ectoplasm bodies and researches into abductions by aliens. Do you think this is true Magnus? It was obvious that he was on the web, searching for books and information. Once I was with my husband and the two kids and we picked up Bobby with the car and he was so totally in his own world that he only fired questions at me, totally oblivious to his surroundings. This fascinated me. Yes, I once told him I had a husband, but he didn't hear it. He didn't hear anything he wasn't interested in (laughs).

'The disadvantage of meeting him was you could be totally stuck with him. If you were in a hurry you suddenly realized, gee, Bobby is here. I can't leave this restaurant within half an hour. Once he would get carried away, he wouldn't eat the food, and he talked so loud that everybody in the restaurant could hear, he was so totally alien to the world. Sometimes people took offence, of course, because there was no choice but listen to him, but everybody liked him and he was a kind of national hero here. Everybody tolerated everything from Bobby, everybody. They just smiled, this is Bobby, this is vintage Bobby. Once when I said to the restaurant manager, sorry about our loud conversation, but he said, ah no, don't worry, this is just Bobby. Only once, when he was buying food at the counter, did somebody in the queue say, oh, you're Bobby Fischer. That was the only time I saw him getting nervous and flashing this hostile look, and he rushed to the table and started eating. He really wanted to be alone.

'I'd drive him home, although he never told me where he lived.'

'Yes, we also spoke about death. I got the feeling that he wanted to believe that there was life after death. But it was all mixed up with his bad feelings about his experience with religion. He was pissed off by religion, that's the word. Something in religion gave him anger, hard feelings, I never knew what it was, but it was connected with his own experience. But he still wanted to believe that there was a better life after this life, and especially another life. Yet, he was a fundamental sceptic. When we spoke about UFOs or nature spirits he would always end by saying, well you never know about this, if this is really these people's experience, you never know. The same with life after death. But it's impossible to know! Magnus, you don't know anything about this! And shouted it through the restaurant and everyone would turn around. He really wanted hard-core evidence for it and hadn't found it.

'He told me that when he was imprisoned in Japan, that he was on his way to the Philippines to see his daughter. That's what I understood from him. But they arrested him and that was illegal. I can understand his conspiracy theories. Why were the Japanese arresting him? He was just passing through there. And in a way, we talked about it once, it was totally beyond him how and why Iceland had managed to get him. He regarded it as a kind of miracle. Iceland was a friend of the U.S., but they still managed to do this. I told him about my brother Össur, who is a minister in the government. He was the leader of the opposition at that time. He really controlled the parties in the parliament and the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. Without my brother's action it probably would not have worked. Things might have gone wrong if it had turned into a political issue. When I told Bobby that my brother had played a key part, he said, yes, please, thank him for that. My brother was not a fan of Bobby's, but he really wanted to help him when he was in trouble. Bobby was a loner, but he felt very well here. He was thankful to Iceland.

'After he died his ex-brother-in-law came here, Russell Targ. And he's one of my heroes, because he has done some amazing research in parapsychology, especially in this remote viewing. He is really one of the big names. When I saw an interview with him in *Morgunbladid*, I called a friend and said, do you know who is in this country? It's Russell Targ himself. We went to the hotel and picked him up. Through him I got to know Bobby quite a lot better. He told me many things. Bobby had severed ties with almost his entire family and all his friends, because somebody had at some stage insulted him, knowingly or unknowingly. Russell was my guest for a week here and we went to the graveyard. He really cared about him. Some people thought he was after the money, but not at all. In fact, there will not be any money he said, but that is not my issue. I will never put any claims on the money. He's the brother of my sons' mother. Most likely there is a daughter, he said, and she will inherit it all, hopefully. Or if he is married then his wife will get it. But that's not the issue. I wanted to show him my respect by coming to the funeral, said Russell.

'And one more thing I can tell you. (Sighs) I can't tell you the source, you can just quote me that I know that Bobby wanted to live longer. But he did not believe in prolonging life with machines. He could have undergone kidney surgery and get new kidneys which would have prolonged his life by a decade or two or more, but he didn't want any assistance at all. He died in enormous pain. They really cared about him in the hospital, but he hardly wanted any assistance at all. Hardly any painkillers. Nothing. In the last days he was more or less unconscious. He knew what was coming. He didn't want to die, but still it was his total independence, no assistance from the world at all. In all this pain. One of his last wishes was to see a picture of his mom. Some sort of reconciliation or whatever it was. At Bobby's request, Gardar (Sverrisson) called Russell to arrange a picture of his mom. He emailed them to Gardar, who printed them out. Bobby had a picture of his mom when he died.

'Why do you want to know all this? Maybe I am telling you too much. (Pauses) I can add one more thing. It's still a mystery in my mind, why such an over-talented man couldn't find a way to deal with the world. That's a mystery to me. The last time I saw him, me and my boyfriend were coming out of a restaurant with our kids. It was last autumn, downtown, and I was holding the hands of the kids and a bus was driving by. It drove very slowly and it was empty except for one passenger in the back. Bobby Fischer. I waved and he waved back.'

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As I leave the Elf School, I cast a slightly worried look at the sky. Thanks to endless rain showers the snow may have gone, but today a small hurricane has been forecast. The inhabitants of Reykjavik have been warned to stay inside as much as possible from four p.m. onwards. I call Helgi Olafsson, grandmaster, member of the RJF committee and one of Fischer's closest friends, to ask if our dinner appointment is in any danger. Helgi doesn't see any problem, but when he meets me at the Hotel Borg at seven p.m., torrents of rain and fierce gusts of wind have emptied the streets. We drive to a street nearby where he knows a simple Italian restaurant and a 'fancy' place, fancy, as I have noticed, being the Icelandic euphemism for expensive. When we open the doors of the car to get out and the storm almost sweeps us off our feet, we no longer think about choices and run for the first restaurant in sight – which happens to be the fancy place. Once we've taken our seats at La Primavera, I let Helgi do the talking.

'I am very happy that we got him out of jail. This detention centre was not the place for him to be. He had been there for nine months before he came to Iceland. A few times he was in solitary confinement because he had some fights inside the jail. I am absolutely sure that it's not a pleasant experience to stay in such a place for such a long time. But he never complained.

'Iceland is too tolerant to have problems with him. At the end of the day, when in 1972 the match was over, everything was forgiven and forgotten. Iceland had very much been at the centre of the world's attention, that was the compensation. I was 16 and living in the Westman Islands at the time. I was working in a fishing factory during the tournament, but I managed to see a few games. For instance this dramatic 13th game, the Alekhine Defence, which Bobby won. An unbelievable experience for me to be there.

'When he came here in 2005 he wasn't speaking much about chess anymore and if he was, it was about pre-arranged games and stuff like that. Most of the time he wanted to discuss those games. But there were occasions when it was possible to speak about other important games in chess history. Once on a fishing trip we were lying on our beds in the small cottage where we were staying and talked about chess for a long time. That was really fascinating, and the two friends who were with us listened breathlessly. Bobby spoke very positively about his colleagues, about Larsen and Portisch. At one point he even admitted that Larsen might have lost the match because of the heat in Denver.

'But I never pressed him for any information at all. I never asked him direct questions. It was more his initiative. He also had such talks with other people. For instance he met Anand here. Bobby was rather interested in having a match with Anand. In Fischerandom, of course. There were some ideas like having the match in India. Or having the match on the Internet exclusively and having admission fees, something like 10 dollars for the entire match. The guy who came here was called Alex Titomirov. He came together with Lautier and Spassky. But I think that Bobby didn't really trust his ideas. They met here in hotel Loftleidir some two or three weeks after Bobby came to Iceland. Initially he got the same suite, for free, where he stayed in '72. Suite sounds better than it was, because when I went to visit him there I was surprised how small it was. After a while he had to start paying, and although I managed to get him a discount this was obviously no solution and in the end he rented the apartment in Klapparstigur.

'There was never really any crisis between us. But there was one thing that he was rather upset about. There was an American camera crew here who wanted to make a programme about Fischer. When he came here I always took all phone calls and talked to almost everyone. For instance *The New York Times* phoned me almost every day for a short period of time, and other big newspapers and TV channels or 60 Minutes as well. So a few months later this American company came here with a camera crew and they asked me to give an interview. Which I did. And Fischer found out and was angry and asked: 'Why did you do this? Were you not going to tell me?' And I said, probably not. Because when you came I was giving interviews all the time and I didn't tell you at that time. Why should I do it now? I think he found this honest enough, that I said I was probably not going to tell him. And I said to him, OK, I am not going to give any more interviews about you. So that stopped.

'This was the first time, but then something happened. There was a documentary film by an Icelandic cameraman who persuaded him to make a documentary film together with Saemi Palsson that he was extremely angry about. At first he was working with them, but then suddenly all hell broke loose, because he felt they were making another kind of documentary than the one he had agreed to. He believed it was a film about his kidnapping from Japan. But then they thought it would be a better idea to make a film about his friendship with Saemi. He became extremely upset with Saemi and he also vented his rage on me. I said to him, I don't understand you at all, I mean, you took part in this, so don't bother me because I was not involved at all. But then he wanted me to criticize Saemi about that in a harsh way. Saying, you are with me or against me, something like that. So we exchanged some not very polite emails (laughs). But he always forgave people at least once. So I was always expecting him to come back and everything would be OK, but then he got sick and I was abroad quite a lot last autumn. So the first time I heard about him again was when he had been in hospital for several weeks. I sent him my regards, but I didn't visit him, because this was his private... hell, really.

'In a way I regret this. The thing is, I miss his company. Because although he was difficult and all that, he was sometimes a lot of fun to be with. I also miss him just in Reykjavik. People liked to have him around. Of course, he was a bit odd. Icelanders have always kind of liked guys like this. And there were no problems with him at all here in Iceland. All the problems he had were with this UBS bank and the Americans, and then these problems with this documentary. He went away too soon. That's my main regret. Because he was only 64. I'm absolutely sure that his disease was curable.

'Yes, he came to my home a few times. But I am living outside Reykjavik and more often I went to his place, and we went to restaurants. Sometimes I took my little boys. He was really nice with them. My oldest son was born on almost the same date as his daughter, if she is his daughter. The date is said to be 21 May in 2001 and my son was born on the 17th of May. He liked small kids and he embraced them, this was nice to watch. Especially since he has been described as a total madman. His public persona was a creation. Of course, he did a lot himself to create this persona, but as a private person he was totally different.

'He also had his anti-semitic rants in private, of course, but I never allowed him to talk about this. I always put up this face when he started to talk about the Jews. He noticed that I didn't like this topic, so he didn't do it often. It is clear that from this time when he was living in this Church of God, that he was always looking for some kind of a guiding hand. When he left the Church, he fell for another kind of religion, which was anti-Semitism and which was even much worse. But there is also another aspect of his that we cannot ignore. He was a professional chess player and he was World Champion and he had stopped playing. There was a vacuum in his existence. So what should he do? And he was feeding the paranoia too much. Where it came from I don't know. You can say that some New Yorkers are a bit paranoid, but he took it to another level.

'He was a bookworm. He was reading a lot about history and not only about World War II. And he was listening a lot to the BBC. Maybe even too much (laughs). I mean, it was not normal how much he was listening to the BBC. He trusted the BBC as a very reliable source. But he was listening to all kinds of stuff. Lots of music and especially lots of Jackie Wilson, whom he adored. Once, when he was having dinner at my place, he put his iPod on the table and kept playing Jackie Wilson till at some point I said, Bobby, please. In late August 2005 Patti Smith came to Iceland for a concert. She had been working in a New York bookstore sometime in the 1960s when the bestselling book *Bobby Fischer teaches chess* was being marketed right there. She wanted to meet Bobby. Maybe she saw him as a rebel. I was asked to arrange a meeting. They talked for two hours in Hotel Borg's restaurant. I don't think it would be appropriate from a mostly silent observer to reflect on everything they discussed but at one point Patti Smith said: 'I somehow always knew you were into music.' When they parted he told her that it felt good to meet someone from the U.S.

'At the beginning of April last year I invited Bobby to a concert at NASA in downtown Reykjavik. Björk was going to perform and Bobby had been full of praise of her film, *Dancer in the dark*. 'I immediately sensed her star quality', Bobby said when we went downstairs to witness Björk perform. After the show they met and Bobby had a few words about soul music. 'Soul is dead', Björk said smilingly. Once I brought up the issue: who was more famous, he or Björk. Bobby was firm on this: 'I am', he said. 'Long term.' I think he was right.

'When he came here I called a friend who has a company and I suggested they donate a laptop to Bobby and they did. But Bobby was not much on the Internet. He was much more into mobile phones, sending messages from his mobile phone. He certainly wasn't playing chess on the Internet. No, no. I am one hundred per cent sure he didn't play on the Internet. This story is a total hoax. His interest in chess was gone, it seemed. That's a tragic thing for a world champion, but it's also normal. He had reached the pinnacle and then somehow he started to distance himself from the game. At first he was really happy to be World Champion, but then he didn't really know what to do. And then, when the moment that he had to defend his title was getting near, he realized he had not prepared at all.

'He had a good sense of humour. Several times I went with him to the cinema. One evening we went to see a movie and I bought the tickets. And I said, you buy the popcorn (has a long laugh at the memory). So he joined the queue to wait for the popcorn. And when he had bought the popcorn I said, you forgot the coke. I want a coke. And he said, that you'll have to get yourself and he handed me a 500 Kroner bill. Because on principle he wouldn't buy Coca Cola. And we both had a good laugh.

'He was rather shy, so he chose topics he fitted into. It was difficult to speak to him about the weather. Any small talk, forget it. He had something on his mind and that had to come out. Sometimes he talked about politics and the environment here in Iceland. He spoke about many things, literature you wouldn't have imagined. Once we spoke about Oscar Wilde. I knew a little bit about him, as I had read *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *De Profundis* and some of his poetry, and he was also into that. I wonder why. Maybe because their fate was a bit similar. I also brought him a couple of books. For instance, he was really interested in the making of the atomic bomb, so I brought him the biography of Oppenheimer, *Shatterer of Worlds*. I also had the files of the trials of Oppenheimer, something like 900 pages. My father had this book and I mentioned it to Bobby but said that probably he would not like to read such a huge book. But he said, no, no, no, please bring it over, I like stuff like this. I don't know if he read it, maybe some bits. But he wasn't faking anything, that was not his character. He was curious about many things. But it was a terrible burden for him to be this famous chess player. That's what I think. He could never get out of this role, which he probably had left behind. At times it was difficult for him, because there were also moments when he enjoyed it.

'The match in '72 was such a great event here that I could never have dreamed to meet him. So if you meet the guy 33 years later, it has to be interesting. At least for me. I am sure that he was caught in a trap. He really didn't plan his career after 1972. That was a great mistake. It was tragic for chess of course that the match against Karpov couldn't take place. I am sure that he suffered ever after. Because every year it was more difficult to come back to the game. And then he disappeared from the scene. Also moneywise it was difficult for him. It was clear that when he came back in 1992 that something had happened to him. He was not a happy man. But all in all I was happy that he got the money from this match and didn't have to live in poverty, because this was the state he was in before this match, as he had burned all bridges behind him. I cannot imagine how it must be to live without a family for all this time, or to live without a country for all this time, without getting shattered in some way. These famous infamous interviews were the expression of a very desperate soul. Was he really talking about those issues that were seemingly on his heart? Wasn't he more expressing his own inner feelings? To me it always seemed that he was just expressing how bad he felt.'

'It was a terrible burden to him, to be this famous chess player.'

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The following day the weather has calmed down considerably. It's a typical Icelandic day, with sudden changes all the time. Sunny spells, clouded skies and snowfall alternate in rapid succession. In the early afternoon I am to meet Gudmundur Thorarinsson, the organizer of the match in 1972 and the person who took the initiative to found the RJF committee. Inundated by requests he has stopped giving interviews, but Einar has persuaded him to make an exception. Gudmundur lives in a quiet residential area some seven kilometres from downtown Reykjavik. I'm driven there by a silent taxi driver. To break the silence I ask him what he thought about Bobby Fischer. Did he ever take offence at his behaviour? He fixes me briefly and says with a deadpan expression 'Oh, it was fine. He was a special person.'

With Gudmundur I hope to speak about the match in '72 and his return to Iceland 33 years later. And I want to know his opinion on the accuracy of two books about the match, the 'fly-on-the-wall' version of Brad Darrach in *Bobby Fischer vs. The Rest of the World*, and the recent (2004) *Bobby Fischer goes to War* by David Edmonds and John Eidonow. When I arrive at his house, he has just returned from a morning of meetings. Serving tea and cake he starts by defining the match as he sees it now, almost 36 years later.

'When we were organizing the match in '72 we named it the match of the century. This was our invention, a kind of advertising. I was a bit reluctant to call it that. I thought this was an overstatement. But now, when I look back, I really think that it was an understatement. This will never be repeated. It's the match of all time. All these contrasts. We had these two great superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, that divided the world between capitalism and Communism. In this world of contrasts the Soviet Union was trying to show their superiority by being a superpower in chess. No one had even had the chance to compete for the chess world championship since 1948, when Botvinnik became World Champion. On the other hand, in the United States of America very few people were interested in chess. Then we had the competitors. Boris Spassky, unusually talented, was trained by the best coaches, the best tournaments, the best books, everything, and he became World Champion. On the other hand we had Bobby Fischer, who was brought up by a single mother, learned to play chess on the floor of his home while his mother was out working. At 14 he became champion of the United States. There he was, all alone. This was the atmosphere, of one lonely man fighting the chess empire of the Soviet Union. All this magnified the whole thing.

'I was never very optimistic that the match would be held in Iceland. In fact, it was my brother's idea. He was the publisher and editor of the Icelandic chess magazine. He is dead now. He was an unusual man in many respects. He was a good chess player, had a passion for the game, and sacrificed nearly everything for chess. Too much in my view (gives a short laugh). He came to me and he said there is an open bid for the world chess championship. I was President of the Icelandic Chess Federation at the time and he told me to make a bid and try to get it to Iceland. I said there is no chance. We are living in a little island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, we don't have the satellite connection with Europe for TV or anything. We don't have the capacity to offer prize-money like the other large countries. It's a waste of time, I told him. But he kept insisting. I was a consulting engineer and had my hands full of work. I didn't think it was realistic, but just to buy peace I said, OK, I'll fill out the documents and do what I can.

'Brad Darrach, he was here during the match. He was in the middle of all the things that were happening. He was working for *Time/Life* and somehow he managed to create the feeling that he was a member of Fischer's team, which he was not. But he was very clever. He was even present in some of the meetings and he was always coming up with proposals and 'could you do this or could you do that'. Not all very realistic. Of course, his book is his account of how he felt things happened, but he is telling many of the things as they happened. I think he was fairly accurate. He was rather negative to me in the beginning during the negotiations with the lawyers' team. They were always trying to get more money and complicating things. I had been talking to Bobby Fischer and I had tried to understand him, even though I am not very clever in psychology. I got the feeling that in some way he reacted like my children. After a while my understanding was that it was necessary for us to have a fixed frame, that we were not running to and fro towards anything he was wishing to have. So I would say, these are the rules, this is what we are offering, and we will stick to that. And we are not willing to accept any large deviations from that. So I was maybe a bit strict, and I think that Brad Darrach said in his book that he was convinced, a strange conclusion, that I was closing so many doors to any changes that it was impossible to think otherwise than that I didn't want to have the match. Later I think he realized that we had chosen the only way to save the match.

'*Bobby Fischer goes to War* is a marvellous book, but there is one thing that astonished me. In their conclusion they say that the Icelanders were reaching out too far to save the match. They were reaching out too far to please Bobby Fischer at the cost of Boris Spassky. Something like that. They think this is because Iceland is such a small country with a small population. Therefore it was such a big thing for them. Reading between the lines, you can see that it says that we should have said, no, there will be no match. OK, away with you, this is madness. But we didn't do it because we are such a small country. Of course this train of thought came to our mind, not once, not twice, but many times. What are we doing? Should we say, OK, go away with the whole thing, this is nonsense? But during the night I was trying to look into the future. How will the future judge you if you cancel the match? They will say there was once upon a time a genius of chess who never became World Champion. He had some peculiar principles and the Icelanders were not able to carry the match through. To show the world this genius and what he was capable of on the chess board. Therefore I thought that chess was the main thing. Let's not damage that. Bring the event to the future. What people will say about me or about other Icelanders doesn't matter. If we had spoiled the whole thing at that time I think that these guys would have written another book and have said the Icelanders were not capable of saving the match.

'His return to Iceland is a long story. We learned from the media that Bobby Fischer was in jail, because his passport was not valid. We were afraid that if the Americans would get him they would put him in prison for maybe 10 years. I often spoke to the American ambassador here and I asked her, what will happen? When will this accusation run out? And she said, never. So at one point I picked up the phone and I called six, seven persons and invited them for coffee here at the table and I said, we have of course the possibility of doing nothing and look at what will happen. But maybe we can do something.

You see, they say he violated that regulation in Yugoslavia. He was moving wooden pieces from white squares to black squares and they said, we'll take him and put him jail in the United States. In his autobiography, Bill Clinton says that this was a regulation which was agreed upon by the United Nations. But the United States adopted it and legalized it. But Clinton also writes that at the time they knew that there were several companies selling weapons to Bosnia. They decided not to accuse them because there was such a shortage of weapons.

It turns out that the only person in the world who has been accused of breaking this regulation is Bobby Fischer. The whole thing seemed madness and we thought, OK, we don't agree with Bobby Fischer about what he is saying about the Jews. We do not agree with some other things he is saying about the United States. But this is a free country, so let's try to get him to Iceland. So we went to Tokyo where we had several press conferences with 60, 70 journalists, and we talked to members of parliament. The feeling in Iceland was that what the Americans were doing with his passport was ridiculous. His passport was valid and they had invalidated it without letting him know. It was impossible to get him to Iceland unless he had an Icelandic passport. So we had to get it through the parliament here to get him Icelandic citizenship. In Japan reporters were saying to us, what kind of guys are you, coming here from Iceland and you're fighting the United States and Japan, the two largest economies in the world? What are you doing? But we managed to save him from dying in an American prison. Even though he also said some foolish things here in Iceland. The Icelanders said, well, but this is Bobby Fischer. He is an eccentric. We have many eccentrics, they have their views, express them and we say OK, that's your freedom of speech. You can say what you like, as long as you don't harm anyone. Then you can be brought to law. But I think the United States have harmed Bobby Fischer much more.'

Gudmundur was no longer in touch with Fischer in the last year of his life because he, like many others, had ended up in Fischer's bad book. During a visit to his house Fischer suddenly started to query Gudmundur about the gate money of the 1972 match. He wondered if everything had been done honestly and whether he had received what they agreed on. Slightly taken aback, Gudmundur said that he didn't know whether the Federation still had the accounts but that he would try to find them and show them to Fischer. In the meantime he assured him that they had done everything in an honourable way and that they had met all their obligations. By now Fischer had become excited and angrily told him: 'You're not speaking like an innocent man. And don't talk to me again till you show me that contract.' The contract could not be found and Gudmundur let the matter rest, knowing that there was little he could do. But he's not really upset, as he didn't see Fischer much anyway and he says that tomorrow he will, of course, be at the ceremony in Selfoss.

* * *

Back at the hotel I make a phone call to Saemi Palsson, Fischer's bodyguard in 1972. We've spoken earlier that day and he's agreed to meet me before going to the theatre in the evening. Palsson is the kind of man who brings calm and a pleasant atmosphere into any room he enters, and no doubt he's taken away many a rough edge while he was around Fischer. When he walks into the lobby of Hotel Borg, his first concern is to fix his mobile phone. It's come loose from a chord he is wearing around his neck and he tries to reattach it. As if we've known each other for years we quietly try to fix the problem and succeed after a couple of tries. With this problem out of the way we decide to cross the street and have him tell his story over a hamburger at Café Paris.

'Bobby could make phone calls from the jail in Japan and I was one of the first people he called. He told me he had been kidnapped at the airport and that he had been put in this detention centre close to the airport. He asked me if I could help him. He was looking for a country to go to, but he thought Iceland was too cold. Then I told him that the average temperature here was better than in New York.

'The first 10 years after the 1972 match we were still in touch, but not much. He called me maybe three or four times. At one time he was going to come here, and I rented a car to go out into the country, but he didn't come. And then he didn't call for 20-something years. I didn't see him for 33 years, that was quite a long time. He must have put me in some shell to draw me out when he needed me. I was always a good friend to him and he was a good friend to me. I don't know, maybe looking back on it I was more a friend to him than he was to me. I am not sure. But he was very happy to see me again and he told me I was the one who freed him and nobody else. That's what he had said to a Russian station and he let me listen to it twice. They said it was the chess federation or this committee and he said, no, it was my friend Saemi, he was the one who saved me.

'It was fantastic to see him back in Japan, but he had aged a lot and lost his hair and he had this beard like Leonardo da Vinci. It was on his 62nd birthday that I saw him again and I sung Happy Birthday for him. I was very happy to get him out so he could die a free man. When he returned to Iceland, it was very much as it had been back in '72. We ate together here and there or he came to our home. We listened to the radio. He was very fond of Jackie Wilson. He had thousands of songs in his iPod. He knew all the words to all the songs.

'He once asked me what was the main reason why we became friends in '72 and I said, one reason must have been that we spoke the same language. Bull's eye, he said. If we hadn't talked the same language we never would have become friends. And also I started helping him. When I was off duty from my work as a policeman I was always helping him, all through the night. After I had been with him for a week or two I was so out of sleep that I told him that I could no longer do this. What can I do? What can I do?, he said. I said the only thing you can do is get your lawyer to get me signed as your private bodyguard. I can't stay on my watch all the time and be with you all the time, without sleeping or seeing my family. So he did that and it was granted right away.

'After the match I went with him to New York. There was this reception by Mayor Lindsay. I was there with my wife and that was very nice. The ceremony was outside. Two, three thousand people out there and he was given the key of the city. At that point I couldn't imagine that he wouldn't play for 20 years. He always said that he would play, he only doubted whether he would put the title at stake. Unless he had to later. I wondered why he didn't play. He is strong-minded, you know. He always had demands before he would get to the table. That was hard. Most of his demands were very reasonable when he explained them to me. I don't remember in detail, but I felt he was very much right in what he was saying. All chess players in the world should be grateful to Bobby, because he managed to get some payment for playing chess. And most of them are better off, I think, because he put chess on another level, moneywise.

'When I was with him in '72, I only had my ordinary salary and because I only was on daywatch I lost half of my pay in the months that I was with him. And I went off the payroll when I went to America with him. The chess federation was going to pay the difference, but they never did. The reason they gave was that I had quite some publicity and was quite a well-known person after it. One of the committee members said, yes, but he can't eat that, he's got a wife and four children. Bobby never paid me anything either, not in '72 and not now. My wife once asked him about that and he said he had to think about himself. I was always working. I wasn't rich, but I always managed to have enough for my family. I never asked him for a penny, never ever. And my wife just said that he was a Jew. Which of course he was. But money isn't everything. I did it for friendship, I never did it for money.

'Then there was the conflict about this film. He never wanted anyone to earn any money off him. I told him, they went with us to Japan and you were happy about that and you gave them your gentleman's agreement that they were allowed to do what they wanted to do with the film. Yes, he said. They did help us to get you out. Yes, of course. But still he wasn't happy about it. And then I said why don't you pay them (not to make the film). I'm not going to pay, he said. But someone should pay it, I said. The government should pay it, you should pay it, he said. He thought they would make millions of dollars and I said, no that is not right, no one in Iceland makes millions of dollars on a film. I told him that I wanted this film to be shown. It was to be a film about me freeing you and you agreed on it. Yeah, but still it should have been more about me, he said. Anyhow, in the end he was almost happy about it until he saw that he was being offered 40 per cent of the proceeds, but this he refused. He wanted everything. And he saw that I had been offered 15 per cent. For which I didn't ask. I didn't even know that I would get anything from the picture. He said, so you're going to earn money off me. And I said, but Bobby, you're earning off me, because you get more than me. Why should you get more? I am Bobby Fischer, he said. I said, yes, the centre of the universe. And we couldn't agree on that.

'I was happy that he bought this apartment close to Gardar Sverrisson. Gardar and his family were around him a lot. For me that was fine because that would give me more freedom. I was having him at my home and he was talking and hanging around till morning, it was very hard work to have him around. He usually called me during the night, I was getting pretty tired. So I wanted to shake loose. When he was thinking of buying the apartment I told him that if after a year or something he wanted to get rid of it, I would pay him at least the price he had paid or maybe more. If he wanted I could put that in writing. And he said, you would do that? And I said, yes of course, because the best thing you can do is to buy an apartment. I have four apartments in Iceland, in the best area, by the sea, I am a master builder, built over 500 houses. I was Chief Inspector here, running a police station for the last eight years, and I was always working on the side as a carpenter.

'The last time we met was about 10 months ago, at the airport. He was meeting Miyoko and was sitting on a bench waiting. I had not seen him for many months, as I had been in India for six weeks and in Spain for three months. And we sat down together and he said, we will talk again Saemi and all that. During his last months I didn't know he was that sick. I called Gardar and he said he was getting better. I didn't know he was about to die. I was in a rehabilitation centre because I had broken my foot and he died while I was there. I didn't know that he had died till journalists called my wife.

'He didn't talk to Einar Einarsson for over a year, because he was always taking pictures and writing things. The same with Thorarinsson, he had not talked to him for a year and a half or more. Because he said he cheated him out of part of the door money. And then he wasn't talking to Gardar. I was begging Bobby to talk to him. But Gardar had put Bobby's shoes in the display window of a shoestore, and there was a picture of it in the papers. He blamed Gardar for using him and all that. He was crazy about that. A picture in the papers of Bobby Fischer's shoes! I am never going to talk to Gardar again, he said. He had seven or eight pairs of the same kind, they were German shoes, open ones, black ones, sandals. They were the same shoes he had been using for a great many years. He wanted me to buy them too, but I didn't find them nice enough. But that's what happens with Bobby, everyone gets put into the cooler now and then.

He said: 'No, it was my friend Saemi, he was the one who saved me.'

'Miyoko always came for two weeks. I think she must have been here 14 times or so. Their relationship was fantastic. He liked and loved her and she was better to him than many wives are to their husband. She deserves all credit. I didn't know that they were married. Bobby didn't tell me. But I very often suggested it because it could help him get out of jail. Even if he had to do it pro forma. John Bosnich is a great guy who is working in Canada as a journalist, and if he said that he was witness to the marriage then so it must be. Because I think he is an honest person. She deserves everything. She was always going to the jail. They had a great affection for each other. But I am pretty sure that he had a child in the Philippines, because I transferred a few hundred thousand Kroner to a bank account, which Bobby paid me back. He said that he wanted to do that because he played that fair. They were here in 2005, the mother and the child. I asked him if it was his daughter and he said he didn't want to discuss it. He was defending the child and I was not pushing it. He was very fond of the child, walking after her when she was dancing. It was his child, no doubt about that. The mother was a young woman, 26 she was then, maybe 28 now or 29.

'My best moments with Bobby? To begin with that fantastic feeling to see him after all that time in Japan. Then I saw him again in Denmark when he was really free. He said to the journalists when he came to Copenhagen: when I saw Saemi my friend, then I knew I was free. And he told me once with the hand on the bible, without you I would never have won the world championship. That was in 1972, when I went from Pasadena, California, to San Francisco, to my brother-in-law. He said, before we part I have to tell you with my hand on the bible that I would never have won the world championship without you. He also said this to the chairman of a banquet in Hollywood at the Sheraton Universal. We were invited there, and the chairman said that he had it from Bobby's own lips that without his bodyguard he would never have won the championship. Then everybody rose and applauded me. There were 400 Senators there, who were discussing tax and trading fares in California State. That gave me the goose bumps. He was honest about that. He was one of the most honest persons that I knew. Very straight, he said what he believed. But sometimes he was pretty hard, passing judgement on everybody, no beating about the bush, he just said what he felt all the time.

'It was a very warm friendship. We were very good friends and in these final months in which I didn't give him too much time, he started to believe something else. Maybe I was seeing the CIA or something. He never said this to me, but I heard it from other people, that maybe Saemi is not in India but is working against me. He could get some crazy notions. I wouldn't do anything against Bobby, my friend, you know. He was suspicious of everybody, especially of the ones who did the most for him. A tragedy. He was with my family, eating at our home and everybody liked him. But still he had some suspicions. And so stupid, worrying about this film, which would just do him good. I find it sad. We went together to swimming pools in town and he wanted me to talk to the Mayor not to put chloride in the water, he was always against that. All kinds of things he wanted me to do. He thought I could work wonders. That made me feel good sometimes, but also... He was afraid to go out of the country, to Europe, because Interpol was asked by the FBI to keep track of 488 points if he came there in order to put him to jail for 10 years and fine him four million dollars.

'I was so sad that I didn't see him before he died. I had trouble sleeping the first few nights. I thought I could have, just before he was put into the coffin, blessed him and said goodbye. I respect that he wanted only his fiancée to be there, because I know how Bobby thought. He just wanted to have it quiet. I respect that all. But I would have wanted to bless him to say goodbye. I am still pretty sad about that. Even though a special ceremony was held for me three days after he was buried by the minister and the organist. And the minister and I sang songs and we spoke inside the church in Selfoss and at the grave. It was a complete funeral, held especially for me. And I never told anyone.'

* * *

After my talk with Saemi Palsson I went for a brief walk in the centre of Reykjavik, thinking about what he had told me. The evening air was fresh and crisp and the snow crunched pleasantly under my shoes. The weather had been relatively quiet, with delightful sunny spells between the snowfall. But the forecast was less promising, as I found out when I returned to my room and got a call from Einar. That night the weather would turn grim again, so they had decided to cancel the memorial service the next morning. With the snow that was expected it was not clear how long it would take to get to Laugardael, if we would get there at all. Disappointing news but understandable.

The next morning I called Fridrik Olafsson, former FIDE President and the strongest chess grandmaster Iceland has ever had, and asked him if I could call on him later in the afternoon.

That was fine with him, and after we had had lunch together Einar kindly drove me to the apartment of the Olafssons at the seaside. On the way he showed me a couple of Fischer landmarks. The Laugardalsholl, where a stone near the entrance tells the visitor that here the 1972 chess match between Fischer and Spassky took place, the apartment building where Fischer moved before his death, and the hospital where he died.

Fridrik received me in his study, where a fine chess table occupies a prominent place. It is the table that all first-board players at the 1966 Olympiad in Havana received as a gift, which, including the pieces, was sent to their homes all over the world. Looking at the table, it didn't take me long to realize that it was this table that served as the inspiration for the one at which Fischer and Spassky played. But Fridrik's memories of Fischer started well before that time.

'I remember quite clearly that I first saw him in a hotel in Ljubljana where we were both staying in 1958, when he was 15. He was bright and smiling, open. And he still was rather uncomplicated. He had not yet started to study weird things and build up his theories. We mostly talked chess and rarely spoke about other things. He already had his own views and stuck to them. He was likable and I always had good relations with him. We played in many tournaments together at that time, as we both wanted to be World Champion. He succeeded, I didn't. We were competitors, trying to climb the same tree. I remember that in 1961 in Bled, this was after the Candidates' tournament, I had a car and we went to Ljubljana a few times to visit a night club. He liked to sing. When the Saints go marching in, songs like that. There was this fellow Bjelica, a journalist, who wanted to use Bobby. To let him do things, and Bobby didn't quite understand that he was being used. He wanted him to come on stage and sing for the guests. So he did that. And I told Bobby, be careful with this guy, he is not your friend. But Bobby didn't see my point and thought I was showing off or something.

'We went to bars, but he was afraid to drink. I think later on he did, when he was older. He came to Iceland when he was 18 and then he had some liquor, but not very much. When we were playing in Bled, my wife was with me, or rather wife-to-be. And she was driving the car, probably because I had been drinking something. And Bobby was quite terrified, that a woman was driving. Fridrik, how can you let a woman drive?

'When he came here in 1972, we just picked up the thread where we had left off. He knew what kind of fellow I was and I remembered him as he was. I never forgot my first impression. I always had that in mind. Even when he changed a lot, these last years when he was ill, I always kept this image. I knew that inside he was that young fellow, that young boy. But as it was, you could only tell him what you thought in a roundabout way, trying to influence him. For instance, when he was here in hospital, it was in many ways his own fault that he was not cured. I think he would be alive today if he had let the doctors get more involved. But they couldn't deprive him of his rights. He was of the belief that the body should cure itself. They could do blood tests, that was all. And he took some medicine to keep down the stuff that was growing in his blood. It comes from the kidney. The kidney was not working, but the reason was something else. Something else put pressure on the kidney which prevented it from working properly. This pressure they could release, but they didn't get his permission to operate on him. Or even to have his blood purified in dialysis. He was stubborn till the end.

'I only saw him once in a while. I didn't make a habit of it, because it could be quite an ordeal. When he was at the hospital I went there every week and stayed for one or two hours. What we were mostly occupied with was going through chess games. I had brought a pocket chess set and we played through games from the Karpov-Kasparov matches and others. He was showing me how they fixed these games (laughs). There was not much use arguing. Well, in a way he had some points in his favour. He showed a very strange move that was played, and said, if you're playing a serious game, you don't make such a move (laughs).

'He had a very good memory. We were talking about people I had completely forgotten about, in Yugoslavia. A fellow who was the head of the federation there in '58. He liked slivovitz, don't you remember him? So I started to remember and then remembered him vaguely. But he remembered tiny details. He also remembered words in Icelandic, although he hadn't studied the language. He called my home when he came here a year and a half before the match, to inspect the place, and he called my home and my little daughter answered. And she knew that he was asking for me and she said that I was not at home in Icelandic. When I later met him he told me the exact words she had used, although he didn't understand them. He had a photographic memory. Once when we were playing in a tournament together he asked me why I made a draw, such a short draw, against Gligoric I believe. I replied that I was not sure about a line, I had forgotten the theory. He looked at me in shock. Really? He couldn't imagine I had such bad memory.

'To have known him is not something you easily forget. I remember this tournament where he was afraid he might lose. That was in 1961. We spent a lot of time together when we were free. One day we were having breakfast and he was worried about a Yugoslav player, Bertok. Ahh, he is a very dangerous fellow, tricky, I must be very careful. I don't know, I might lose to him. And I was getting annoyed and said to him, please Bobby, even if you lose, one game, once in a while, it's not the end of the world. And he looked at me and said, well you can think like this, I cannot. (Starting with this game in Bled, Fischer played Mario Bertok four times, winning all four games – DJtG)

'What I admired in him was his unwavering determination that one day he would make it. It took some time, but he did. For that he had to overcome his conservatism in his chess openings. In the Candidates' tournaments that he played his opening play was rather narrow, so the Soviets could quite easily exploit that. He thought that if he always played the same openings he would master them, but in fact it was a drawback. But after 1968 he completely changed his opening repertoire and in his games against Spassky he suddenly played 1.c4.

'I don't know if he was mentally ill. You always have to ask yourself how you define this. There is a doctor here, Magnus Skulason, he is a psychiatrist. He defined Bobby as someone who saw things in a different light from someone who is normal. But then who is normal? All these theories of people who were putting things in his way, his being persecuted by the Zionists, these conspiracies. This was very natural to him. Actually he gave an interview here on the radio about this bank in Switzerland, complaining about their behaviour, and he was quite alright. He did this very well, just like any other person. But you could also be talking about something and then he'd suddenly say, well, you know, they're after me. The regime, the Zionists. Then what can you say?

'He never became anybody's friend. He never gave, he only accepted. He could be very understanding at times and try to please you, but mostly people had to give to him. Two years ago I was involved in attempts to raise money for a match. In the United States there were people who were willing to pay 10 or 15 million dollars. Not the usual chess, either this random chess or Gothic chess. The fellow I spoke to was the inventor of this Gothic chess, and he wanted Bobby to play a match to give this game popularity. This really took a lot of my time and finally it came to nothing. This man came here to Iceland and he became ill and he had to go back without meeting Bobby. Then Gardar had a conversation with Bobby and explained that I had spent a lot of time on this. And that I was not getting anything. Then Bobby said, well, these people could pay him. Or the federation (laughs).

'He wanted to have his own private life, but at the same time he didn't want people to forget him. He had a phobia against the media. We had a little gathering when I celebrated my 70th birthday in 2005. Spassky came over and we had a small symposium. Spassky and I decided to get Bobby to have lunch with us. Helgi was there and my wife and Marina, Spassky's wife. We had the whole restaurant to ourselves because he didn't want to have other guests. The owner opened up the restaurant which was normally closed on Sunday. Then Helgi was to fetch Bobby at his home and we were just waiting. After half an hour Helgi arrived alone and said, he refuses to come with me because he thinks that the media will be there. And the main reason why he didn't want to come was that we had selected the place. We should have gone somewhere, but without selecting the place. Just find something random. So Spassky went back with Helgi trying to persuade him to come. And after another half hour they came with Bobby. Spassky had succeeded. The first thing Spassky did when they entered the restaurant was to open all the doors. Come here, Bobby, there is nobody here. Next door, see, nobody here. He was satisfied that no one was there, but then he started drawing the curtains. There might be someone outside in a tree with a camera. So he drew all the curtains. I don't know what to call this.

'Whether he was the greatest player ever? Well, I wouldn't say no. When I played him later on, in 1968, it was like running into a wall. And his analysis was really fantastic and deep. When you have been following somebody very intimately, that is something you are very sure of. You cannot do anything better than this.'

'To have known him is not something you easily forget.'

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Before Einar dropped me off at Fridrik's place, we had paid another visit to the Bókin bookshop to see if Bragi was there. He was. Standing in front of a mountain of books he reminisced about Fischer with relish. A mountain of books that had highly annoyed his regular customer, who more than once suggested he help him clean it up as he was convinced there were books there that might be of interest to him. Fischer would mostly arrive late in the afternoon on his way home, sometimes he'd come in the evening if Bragi had the lights on. He would look for biographies of outlaws from all kinds of countries, people who were in a similar situation as he was. And books on American politics between 1940 and 1960, everything after that date was 'all lies'. But he also bought six chess books in Russian when he found them in the chess section. Usually if he bought more than one book, he'd get a discount. This made him visibly happy, but he never haggled. He also asked Bragi to look out for certain books. Behind the counter he showed Fischer's last request. On a slip of paper Fischer had penned the name of a book by the American cartoonist Jimmy Hatlo ('40s or 50s') entitled *They'll Do It Every Time.*

Bókin was almost a second home for him, and when Saemi Palsson was in Spain he would have his mail, which he didn't trust to receive at his own apartment, delivered here. Of course, it became well known that he frequented Bókin, and Bragi pointed at a shelf where customers left books for him to sign. Which he always did. One day a Russian television crew surprised him at Bókin. Fischer's reaction was remarkably relaxed. He just laughed and rushed out.

Bragi liked having him around, and after taking a sniff of tobacco he suddenly exclaimed 'I miss him! He was always nice and kind'. Inevitably I asked him if Fischer had ever been cross with him. That was not the case, although he had chided him once. Bragi had said on the radio that the FBI had issued a search warrant to 487 places all over Europe. The next time he came to the shop Fischer had been angry and told him that the right number was 488! Try to be exact next time! Bragi smiled at the memory. 'He was angry, but not at me, at the Americans.' For the rest he took him as he was. 'He was living in his own world. I didn't want to disturb him, because this world was not mine.'

Fischer may have died, and Kasparov retired, but chess still has its superstars. Few young talents shine as bright as Magnus Carlsen, who has continued to justify the hopes he raised as a 13-year old. Nowadays, it is relatively easy for a talented youngster to become an openings expert, but a high level of endgame technique is usually a sign of really exceptional promise. In the following piece, Jan Timman pays tribute to the young Norwegian's remarkable technical maturity.

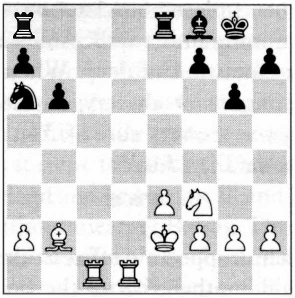
Magnus Carlsen's technique

Jan Timman

After the conclusion of the Corus tournament, Kortchnoi observed that Magnus Carlsen was not a deserving co-winner, as he had seen far too few chess positions in his young life. 'Incomprehensible criticism', a Dutch journalist called this. I did not agree. It is part of a tradition for Kortchnoi to speak slightingly about up-and-coming stars. In the early 1990s, for example, he said about Anand that 'he's playing just for tricks', a remark he took back later. And his observation about Carlsen doesn't even have to be taken as criticism. Regardless of whether Carlsen's victory in Wijk aan Zee was deserved, it is a considerable achievement for a 17-year-old player with relatively little experience to score a top result.

Carlsen is a strikingly all-round player. He plays many different types of games and seems to feel at home in all of them. As a result, it is very hard to take him by surprise. I think he is at his best in technical positions. There has been a trend of late for very young players to display excellent endgame technique. Halfway the 1990s, Karpov drew attention to how good Leko's technique was, and some years later Kramnik praised Bacrot for the same reason.

But Carlsen is even better in this respect than the above-mentioned GMs. In this article I will discuss his technical skills on the basis of three recent practical examples.



Carlsen-Elianov
Wijk aan Zee 2008
position after 21...♗f8

A typical Grünfeld position. White is slightly better because of his greater say in the centre. He starts by centralizing his knight.

22.♘d4 ♘c5

An obvious reaction, but in Yearbook 87 Grivas indicates 22...♖ac8 as stronger. And it's true that aiming for the rook swap is a good plan. 23.♘b5 is met by 23...♖xc1 24.♖xc1 ♘c5, and the black pawn is taboo. With 25.♗d4! White will be able to maintain a slight superiority.

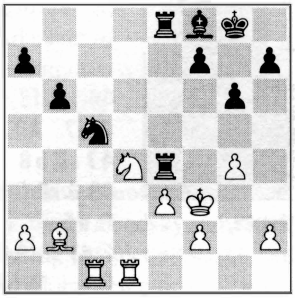
23.g4

Expansion on the kingside. White wants to push his h-pawn to h5, if possible, in order to put pressure on the enemy position. Less good was 23.h4 in view of 23...h5, and the white majority has been immobilized.

23...♖e4

A direct reaction to White's last move and also a clear error. Black should have kept his rooks on the back rank to enable him to withstand the white pressure. e4 is a bad square for the rook. Good moves would have been 23...♖ac8 and 23...♗g7, after which White has only a slight advantage.

24.♔f3 ♖ae8



25.h3

This little prophylactic move shows the hand of the master. White thinks better of expanding on the kingside and starts exploiting the awkward position of the black rook on e4.

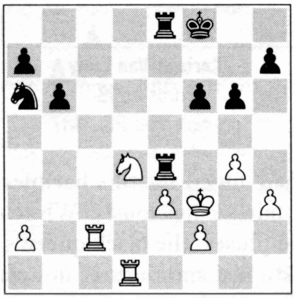
25...f6 26.♗a3 ♔f7 27.♖c2

Another strong little move. Karpov in his heyday would not have done better. Black no longer has any useful moves.

27...♘a6

This allows the white pieces to penetrate the enemy position, but it was hard to find a useful alternative. It has been made painfully clear how misplaced the rook is on e4. If it had been on d7, there would hardly be a problem.

28.♗xf8 ♔xf8



29.♖c6

Remarkable. With 29.♘c6 White could have won a pawn by force, although it is unclear whether the rook ending arising after 29...♘b4 would be winning for White. After the continuation 30.♘xb4 ♖xb4 31.♖c7 ♖e7 32.♖d8+ ♔f7 33.♖dd7 ♖xd7 34.♖xd7+ ♔e6 35.♖xa7 h5 there are all kinds of technical pitfalls.

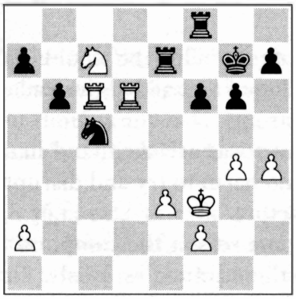
Carlsen apparently assessed his position as so good that he had no need to go for the pawn. The rest of the game shows that this assessment was probably correct.

29...♔g7 30.♘b5 ♖4e7 31.♖dd6 ♘c5

Indirectly covering the f-pawn. 32.♖xf6 would fail to 32...♘d7, and White loses the exchange.

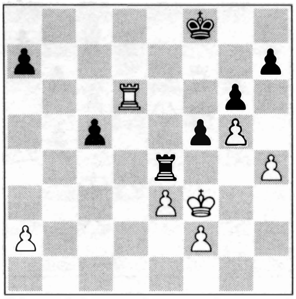
32.♘c7 ♖f8 33.h4

It was too early for 33.♖xc5, as 33...bxc5 34.♘e6+ ♖xe6 35.♖xe6 ♖c8 would yield Black just enough counterplay, since his rook is now behind the passed pawn.



33...♖ff7

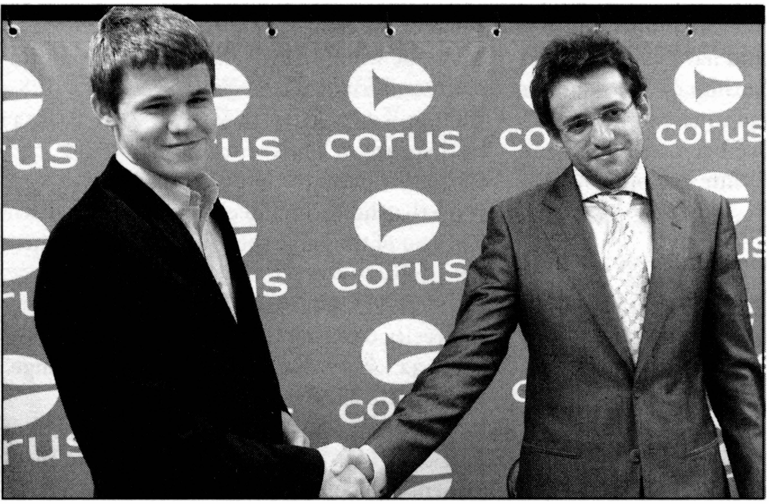
Grivas indicates 33...f5 as better here, intending to activate the rook with 34... ♖e4 after 34.g5. After this, one of his variations continues with 35.♖xc5 bxc5 36.♘e6+ ♔f7 37.♘xf8 ♔xf8



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

38.♖a6 ♖xh4 39.♖xa7 ♖h5 40.♔f4 c4, and Black just manages to save the draw.

I am afraid that Grivas has fallen victim to the computer here. If he had analysed with an open



YE RONGGUANG

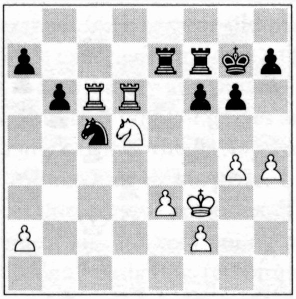
The present and the future of chess – with a combined age of just 42, Carlsen and Aronian shared first place at Corus 2008.

mind – without help – he would undoubtedly have concluded that 38.h5! (instead of 38.♖a6) was very strong.

The h-pawn was attacked, and in such cases it can do no harm to try and disrupt the black pawn structure.

But for some reason the computer refuses to consider the advance seriously. Only several moves later does it indicate a clear plus for White. After 38...gxh5 39.♖f6+ ♔g7 40.♖xf5 ♖c4 41.e4 White has two connected passed pawns that will decide the issue. Black's passed pawns have not advanced far enough.

34.♘d5

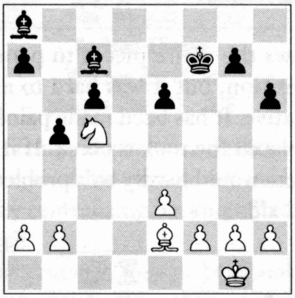


For the first time the knight gets to this beautiful central square. White is forced to allow the rook swap, but his pressure on the enemy position, meanwhile, is strong enough to make this no longer a problem.

34...♖d7 35.♖xd7 ♘xd7 36.♔g3 ♘c5 37.f3 h6 38.♘f4 g5 39.♘h5+ ♔g6 40.f4 Black is being hemmed in more and more. **40...gxf4+ 41.exf4 ♔h7 42.f5 ♔g8 43.♔f3 ♘d7 44.♔e4** Now White is threatening to capture the f-pawn, forcing Black to make his position even more passive. **44...♔f8 45.♖c8+ ♔e7 46.♔d5 b5 47.♖h8 ♘b6+ 48.♔c6 ♘c4 49.♖a8 ♘e5+ 50.♔c5 ♘d7+** After 50...♘xg4 White would calmly continue with 51.♘f4. Black is being outmanoeuvred. **51.♔xb5 ♔d6 52.♖xa7 ♖f8 53.♔b4 ♘c5 54.♔c4** Black resigned.

No, Karpov could not have improved on this. White's technique was a joy to behold.

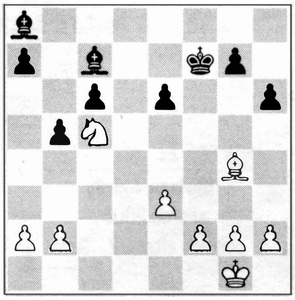
During the Foros tournament, Carlsen got another chance to demonstrate his excellent technique.



Carlsen-Van Wely
Foros 2008
position after 26...♔f7

Carlsen had aimed for this harmless-looking endgame fairly consciously. White can boast some little pluses: the black queen's bishop is badly positioned and there is an isolated black e-pawn. But Black has the bishop pair and his king is closer to the scene of action, which means that the balance has by no means been upset yet.

27.♗g4
Before putting his bishop on f3, White wants to provoke e6-e5.

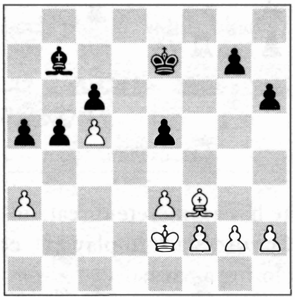


27...e5
Not bad; but it was not really necessary to advance the e-pawn. Brodsky indicated 27...♗d6 here, intending to meet 28.♘xe6 with 28...c5. Now the black bishop pair fully comes into its own, which means that White is better advised not to go for this.

As in the game, he will have to go 28.b4, after which Black can swap on c5 in slightly more favourable circumstances and then deploy his queen's bishop via b7. But all in all there's nothing wrong with the text.

28.♗f3 ♔e7 29.♔f1 ♗b6 30.b4 a5 31.a3 ♗xc5
Black decides to go for the bishop ending. The alternative was 31...♔d6, after which White plays 32.♘e4+. If Black then goes 32...♔c7, White has the unpleasant 33.♘g3, with the threat of 34.♘f5, and the black queen's bishop returns to the play too late.

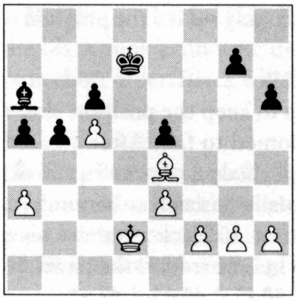
32.bxc5 ♗b7 33.♔e2



The endgame is more difficult for Black than it seems.

Generally speaking, the defending player in an endgame with bishops of the same colour can afford to have two weak pawns. In this case Black has only one weak pawn, but he still has problems because pawn c6 needs to be protected, which means that his pieces cannot be very active.

33...♗a6 Preventing 34.♔d3. **34.♔d2 ♔d7 35.♗e4**



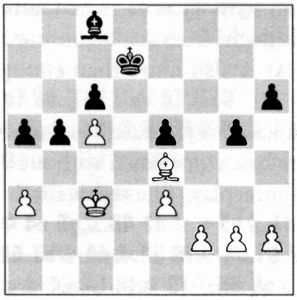
35...g5
After this move Van Wely offered a draw, which Carlsen did not accept because he can play for a win without running any risk.

The text, incidentally, is Black's best option, as witness:

– 35...♗c8 36.f4 exf4 37.exf4 ♔c7 38.f5!, followed by the advance of the h- and g-pawns. Black's weak c-pawn will be his undoing;

– 35...b4 36.axb4 axb4 37.♗d3 ♗b5 38.♔c2!, with the threat of 39.♗xb5 cxb5 40.♔b3. After 38...♗a4+ 39.♔b2 ♔e6 40.♗e4! Black will be in zugzwang. 40...♔d7 is met by 41.♗c2, and White wins the b-pawn.

36.♔c3 ♗c8



37.g3!
White must start aiming for f2-f4, because if he plays 37.f3 first, Black will be able to build a solid defensive line: 37.f3 ♔c7 38.g3 ♗d7 39.f4 exf4 40.exf4 gxf4 41.gxf4 ♗e8 42.f5

♔d7, and White's f-pawn can't advance any further.

37...♔c7

Now Black is lost. With 37...g4! he should have prevented White from creating a passed pawn. White cannot win then, e.g. 38.f4 gxf3 39.♗xf3 ♔c7 40.h4 ♗e6 41.g4 e4! 42.♗e2 ♔d7, and Black has largely solved the problem of his weak c-pawn.

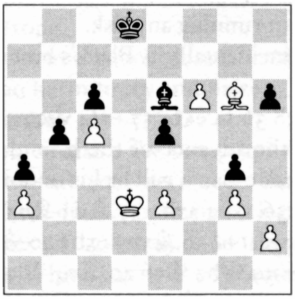
38.f4 g4

Black tries to keep the position closed, but this plan is doomed to fail. After 38...exf4 39.exf4 gxf4 40.gxf4 ♗d7 41.f5 ♗e8 42.f6 ♗f7 43.♗f5 White actually has a clear winning plan: taking his king to e5. If Black advances his b-pawn, it returns to help surround the pawn.

39.f5 ♗d7 40.f6 ♔d8 41.♔d3 a4

Another pawn on a light square. Black is clearly fighting a losing battle.

42.♗g6 ♗e6



43.♔c3

Henrik Carlsen observes in his weblog that Magnus was angry afterwards for having missed a direct win with 43.♔e4, when, after 43...b4, 44.♔xe5 is decisive.

But the text is also more than enough for the win.

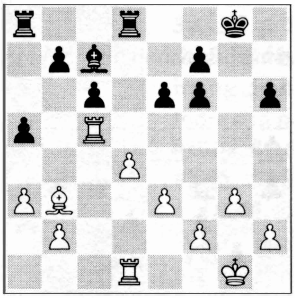
43...♔d7 44.♗e4 ♗f7 45.♗f5+ ♔e8 46.♗xg4

And White has won a pawn without Black having any counterplay. The rest is easy.

46...♗d5 47.♗h5+ ♔d7 48.♗g6 e4 49.g4 ♔e6 50.f7 ♔e7 51.h4 ♔f8 52.♔d4 ♔e7 53.h5 ♗xf7 54.♗xe4 ♗e8 55.♗f5 ♔f6 56.e4 ♔g5 57.♗c8 ♔f4 58.e5 b4 59.axb4 a3 60.♔c3 ♔xe5 61.♔b3

Black resigned.

Two rounds later, Carlsen again had a slightly better endgame, this time with opposite-coloured bishops and rooks.



Carlsen-Shirov
Foros 2008
position after 22...♖a8

Again, Carlsen consciously went for this endgame. It goes without saying that White, with his better pawn structure, is slightly better, but how to expand this little plus? In practice, such a position is difficult to play for Black, as he has no useful moves.

23.♔g2 A quiet move that shows that White is in no hurry.

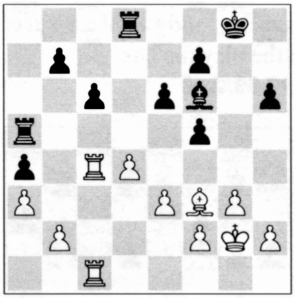
23...♗d6 24.♖c2 f5 25.♗c4 a4

With two consecutive pawn moves Black tries to increase the influence of his pieces without weakening his set-up even further. The text vacates square a5 for the rook.

26.♗e2

White is going to put his bishop on f3, from where it will exert pressure on the queenside.

26...♗e7 27.♗f3 ♖a5 28.♖c4 ♗f6 29.♖dc1



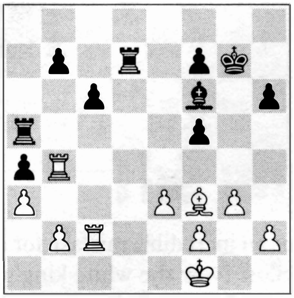
Now White has a concrete threat: 30.♖b4 ♖d7 31.♖cc4, forcing Black to play 31...e5 in order to prevent losing a pawn.

29...e5

He decides he might as well do it at once. The breaking move with the e-pawn is both good and bad.

On the one hand, it activates the black bishop, which will enable Black to put pressure on the white b-pawn. On the other hand, Black's kingside pawn structure is completely wrecked, and it is this aspect of the position that Carlsen will eventually exploit to the full.

30.dxe5 ♗xe5 31.♖b4 ♖d7 32.♖c2 ♔g7 33.♔f1 ♗f6



34.♖cc4

White is going to take this rook to f4 in order to exert pressure on the pawns on a4 and f5. In his weblog, Henrik Carlsen suggests that this is not a good plan, since it allows a black rook to find its way to c5.

Better was 34.♔e2 in order to be able to take the rook to d2 at some stage.

34...♖a8 35.♖f4 ♖a5 36.♔e2 ♖c5 37.♖fc4

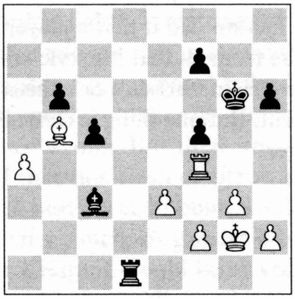
White offers a rook swap in less favourable circumstances. He had no choice, as otherwise the black rooks would become too active.

37...♖xc4 38.♖xc4 ♗xb2 39.♖xa4 c5 40.♔f1 b6

There was nothing against the energetic 40...b5, after which it will be plain sailing for Black to draw. Maybe Shirov was harbouring winning aspirations, but as the rest of the game will show, these were quite unwarranted.

41.♗e2 Nicely played. White blocks the queenside pawns.

41...♗c3 42.♗b5 ♖d1+ 43.♔g2 ♗a5 44.♖f4 ♔g6 45.a4 ♗c3



46.g4!

White is going to exploit the weakness of the black kingside in highly original fashion.

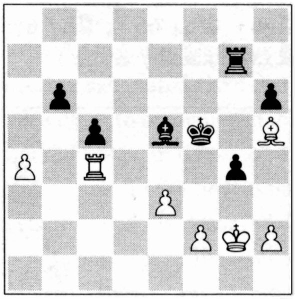
46...fxg4 47.♗e8

The point of the previous move. White wants to attack. The material has been reduced, but the opposite-coloured bishops work to White's advantage. Besides, the white king is perfectly safe and the black rook cannot be deployed in the defence in short order. Black will have to defend very accurately.

47...♗e5 48.♗xf7+ ♔g5

The king is not very safe here, but 48...♔g7 49.♖f5 would not solve Black's problems either. Shirov has a solid defensive plan in mind.

49.♖e4 ♔f5 50.♖c4 ♖d7 51.♗h5 ♖g7



52.a5

Otherwise White will make no progress. The white rook needs space on the queenside. The drawback of the text is that it will give Black a passed a-pawn that is not entirely harmless.

52...bxa5 53.♖xc5 ♖a7 54.♖c4 ♖g7

Again, Black covers the g-pawn, which is correct. After 54...a4 55.♗xg4+ ♔g6 56.f4 White would get winning chances. The a-pawn can be blocked on a2.

55.♖c5 ♖a7 56.♖c4 ♖g7 57.♖c6

Carlsen is exploiting his opponent's time-trouble. The text would have been a shot in the dark if Black had played 57...♔g5.

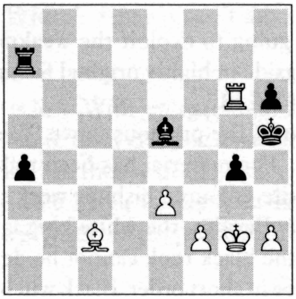
57...♖a7

A mechanical reaction that gives White renewed practical chances. Correct was 57...♔g5, after which the white initiative will peter out.

58.♗g6+ ♔g5 59.♗c2 a4

This is just about possible, but 59...h5 would have been safer, as this would have given the black king a hidey-hole on h4.

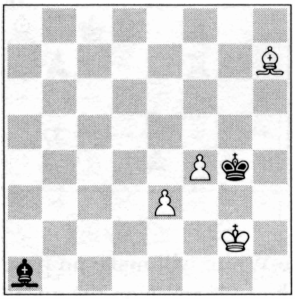
60.♖g6+ ♔h5



61.♖e6

The critical move was 61.h3 to try and catch the enemy king in a mating net. Black should then bite the bullet with 61...a3, after which White would have the following choices:

A) 62.hxg4+ ♔h4 63.♗f5 a2 64.♖xh6+ ♔g5 65.♖g6+ ♔h4 66.f4 ♖h7 67.♖a6 a1♕ 68.♖xa1 ♗xa1 69.♗xh7 ♔xg4



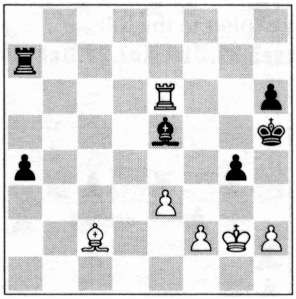
and the bishop ending is unwinnable for White;

B) 62.♖xg4 ♖g7 63.♖xg7 ♗xg7 64.♗b3, and now 64...♗e5 and 64...♗f8 are the most accurate moves to reach the draw. The idea is 65.f4 ♗d6 66.♔f3 ♔g6 67.e4 ♔f6 68.♔g4 h5+!, and White will get no further.

Shirov would probably have found the correct defence in both variations, since everything is forced. There are no real surprises.

The text is less dangerous for Black, but effective for this very reason. This paradoxical statement is based on psychology.

The defending player, with little time, is geared to calculate a number of sharp variations. When confronted with a totally unexpected and seemingly harmless move, he tends to go wrong.



61...♗g7?

This seems an incredible mistake for a player of Shirov's class. Now the white king gets access to square g3, after which the mating net around the black king will be closed.

Both 61...♗c7 and 61...♗b8 would have been sufficient to preserve the balance, although Black would have to continue playing accurately, e.g. 61...♗c7 62.h3 a3 (the only move) 63.hxg4+ ♔xg4 64.♖g6+ ♔h4!, and the black king is safe enough. But not 64...♔h5 in view of 65.♔h3, and White wins.

62.♔g3 ♖a5 63.♗g6+ ♔g5 Black resigned.

This endgame reminds me even more of Karpov than Carlsen's game against Elianov. The former World Champion often manoeuvred like this as well. He did not always manage to find the sharpest way in the endgame but continued to give little pinpricks to make his opponent's life very difficult.

Magnus Carlsen belongs to a different generation, of course. He has grown up with the computer, which means that he can operate efficiently under all kinds of conditions and is not hampered by the prejudices that used to be part and parcel of classical chess.

An old dictum had it that a player of 17 still needs to be formed, that his style still needs to crystallize out. In Carlsen's case this applies to a lesser extent. But one thing is clear: he can still get stronger.

It is perhaps appropriate that our journey through the New In Chess years should end with the following article. Along with Kasparov, Vishy Anand has been the other leading player, who has most dominated the last two decades. In late 2008, he finally achieved his dream of the undisputed world championship, by beating Kramnik in splendid style in their match in Bonn. In so doing, he also ended the 15-year schism, which had started with the Kasparov-Short breakaway in 1993.

The winner takes it all

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

The long-awaited world championship match between Vishy Anand and Vladimir Kramnik ended in a resounding victory for the Indian super-GM. Entering calculated risks and outfoxing his opponent with superb opening preparation, Anand took a close to insurmountable three-point lead in the first half of the 12-game match. Kramnik fought back in the second half, but his resurrection came too late to change the unambiguous 6½-4½ verdict. The Russian former World Champion was gracious in defeat, called his adversary's victory fully deserved and opined that Anand has now joined the ranks of the great champions. In the eyes of many chess lovers Anand already belonged in this company before he came to Bonn. They see his spectacular win as further testimony of the fabulous strength of a uniquely gifted player.

On the first day of the match, as I was climbing the stairs of the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany to go to the press centre, I ran into an Indian journalist. With an open smile she asked what my prediction for the match was. Never one eager to flaunt prognostications about matters that are beyond my control, I almost automatically answered apologetically that I had no idea. 'Come on', she insisted, 'I am only asking you off the record'. 'Well', I said, slightly regretting my instant refusal, 'I can tell you that in hindsight I will be able to explain any outcome.' Indeed, how brilliant and how chess-politically correct.

And how wrong. But then who could have expected that this clash of titans, this widely publicized heavy-weight bout, would be virtually over after a mere six games? Who had foreseen that Kramnik would be kicked about the board when playing with the white pieces? That in practically every game he would plunge into thought after the opening, yet again surprised by a cunning idea brewed in Anand's laboratory? The simple answer is: No one. Not even one of the increasing number of people who claim to have announced the financial crisis years ago.

The first two games of the match didn't foreshow this dramatic scenario either. After a modest opening ceremony in which the main guests of honour failed to turn up, Game 1 ended in an insipid 32-move draw. The most notable absentees on the opening night were Peer Steinbrück, the German Minister of Finance, an avid chess fan and the patron of the match, and FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. Mr. Steinbrück had to be in Berlin for talks to inject billions of Euros into the German economy, while due to the same financial crisis Mr. Ilyumzhinov had to be in Moscow at the request of president Medvedev (aka President Putin). The emergency meetings in the Rus-

World Chess Championship
WINNER
Germany 2008

The winner takes all – Anand receives his trophy as undisputed world champion.

sian capital also kept Alexander Zhukov, Deputy Prime Minister and president of the Russian chess federation, from travelling to Germany. In Mr. Ilyumzhinov's absence the speeches on behalf of FIDE were made by Honorary President Florencio Campomanes, who expressed his gratitude that at the age of 81 he was present at another world championship match. Later on Mr. Steinbrück did manage to attend the match, but Mr. Ilyumzhinov didn't make it to Bonn at all.

The short draw in the first game aroused fears that there might be more ahead, and when I left the playing hall to rush to the press conference I couldn't fail to hear the question that a disappointed German television reporter asked a visitor: 'But don't you agree that the last hour of the game was quite boring?' At the press conference the players spoke about a normal draw, the kind that you can expect in a match when the contestants still have to warm up. It certainly didn't affect Kramnik who, when he was asked what he was planning to do that night, replied without any hesitation and with a big smile: 'I'm going to have a party.'

The second game also lasted 32 moves and ended prematurely in a draw when Kramnik offered a draw and Anand, with only three minutes on the clock, accepted the offer in a much better position. Possibly relieved by this escape, Kramnik again was all jokes at the press conference, and when he was asked if he'd been highly surprised by Anand's switch from 1.e4 to 1.d4, he said that of course he and his team had been preparing for 1.d4 as well, but added in a jocular aside that they had 'not looked at 1.b4 and 1.c4.' And when someone brought up the risk of many more short draws he spoke with uncanny foresight: 'Don't worry, I think that half of the games will end in decisions.' Indeed, after six games, half of the games had seen decisions. Victories of Anand with black in Games 3 and 5, and with white in Game 6 had abundantly shown that the world champion's team had prepared for Operation Bonn with greater ingenuity.

The teams of both players were a mix of old hands and surprises. Anand's team consisted of Peter Heine Nielsen, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, Surya Ganguly and Radoslaw Wojtaszek, while Kramnik relied on Sergey Rublevsky, Peter Leko and Laurent Fressinet. Those were the ones present in Bonn, but no one doubted that both teams received further assistance from allies working at home.

The hat-trick that Anand pulled off in the first half was not only a blow to Kramnik, but also to the organizers. For most of the rounds the hall was sold out and for them the match couldn't last long enough. Ideally it would even go into extra time with a rapid and blitz tie-break, as every day generated income. Now that the match threatened to end prematurely, they were facing the risk that they had to refund the tickets for one or more of the final rounds. And with the tickets being sold for 35 euro each (a hefty amount for chess standards, but a highly reasonable entrance fee if you think of other sports events and concerts) this was not something they were looking forward to.

The same went for the Foidos system, the pay-service that broadcast the games, showed live footage from the playing hall and its surroundings and had commentary in English, German, Spanish and Russian. Foidos proved to be a new step in the professionalization of chess broadcasts, even though its debut was slightly marred by various technical imperfections.

Because of the Foidos experiment and a deal with ChessBase the games were initially given to other portals with a 30-minute delay. For anyone who knows the unwritten rules of the Internet, there was no doubt that this delay was doomed to end in failure within a couple of days. And this is exactly what happened. After two rounds it was clear that with or without permission the games would be broadcast all over the net without delay anyway, and this convinced the organization to cease their efforts to enforce it.

Due to Anand's explosion in the first half, the match didn't go the full stretch of 12 games. Kramnik managed to take the initiative in the second half, but the three-point gap proved too big to bridge. Still, thanks to a draw in Game 9 (when Anand could have decided the issue if he had won) and Kramnik's face-saving win in Game 10, the match lasted eleven games. Which was a fully deserved reward for the truly excellent organization by the Universal Event Promotion team. UEP hopes to organize many more top-notch chess events, and given the flawless way they staged this match, one can only wish them well.

UEP is led by Josef Resch who, and there is no secret about that, is a close friend of Kramnik's. However, he was fully justified in his pride when he stressed that everyone could see that his organization had created exactly the same excellent conditions for both players. What's more, to avoid any misunderstandings he had not had any non-official contact with Kramnik's camp during the match.

Indeed, there was no reason to think that any of the players had a 'home advantage' in Bonn, although one got the feeling that amongst the local spectators there was a slight preference for Kramnik. As could also be read in the evaluation after the match in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which echoed Kramnik's opinion. 'Anand's match victory in Bonn has shown that he is also a master in this format. With this he has secured a place in history.' It seems safe to say that Anand indeed proved that he is also a great match player, but his fans will rightly claim that he already fully deserved his place in history before he played Kramnik in Bonn. Perhaps Kramnik's German ties and numerous wins in Dortmund made him slightly more popular with the spectators, but in any case Anand, who after all plays for Baden-Oos and has won the Chess Classic in Mainz countless times, stole the heart of the audience that attended the final game when he thanked everyone in a short speech in German.

Vishy Anand: 'It's basically about whether you can outfox the other guy and how you do so'

With a draw in Game 11 World Champion Vishy Anand reached the desired 6½ points to successfully defend his title. He played with the white pieces and was in control all through the 24-move game, but the tension was enormous. 'When I woke up at nine I thought, only six more hours and then the game starts. I can't take this waiting anymore.'

For Vishy Anand the day after is filled with phone calls and interviews. He's barely had any sleep, but he's all energy and happiness. For the moment the joy over his match victory camouflages any signs of the fatigue that will inevitably catch up with him in the days ahead. Immediately after the match he phoned his parents and in-laws ('They were breathing easier after a long time') and among the incoming congratulatory phone-calls the one of the Indian president stood out. In the evening he had little wish to go to bed in time and in the end he and his wife Aruna and the team watched a movie till 3 am. Now I am his umpteenth interview appointment, but he doesn't seem to mind at all. Before sitting down, he answers two more calls and then he is all ready to answer some more questions, grinning when I tell him that he had to pull off something extraordinary to make headlines in India with cricket star Sachin Tendulkar setting a new world record in the recent test match against Australia and the Chandrayaan 1 being launched as part of India's lunar ambitions.

'Sure, this moon launch was quite nice, a bit modest, but still it's a start. But I really was in a bubble here, I wasn't following any news very closely. Some minor stuff like the U.S. election, but nothing with any sort of intensity. Mostly I was only focusing on the match. I even missed most of the football. The focus was here and relaxing was again watching *Yes, Minister* and things like that. Yes, I am afraid I know them by heart now, but then we start again (laughs). Something short which helps you laugh a bit. And I was going to the gym every evening, to unwind. I think I managed that in 11 games and all the rest days maybe 15, 16 times. I was sort of following the things on the web, but mostly things that are very distant from here. I was not following the chess news.'

– And the financial crisis is not something you want to delve into anyway if you want to keep a good mood.

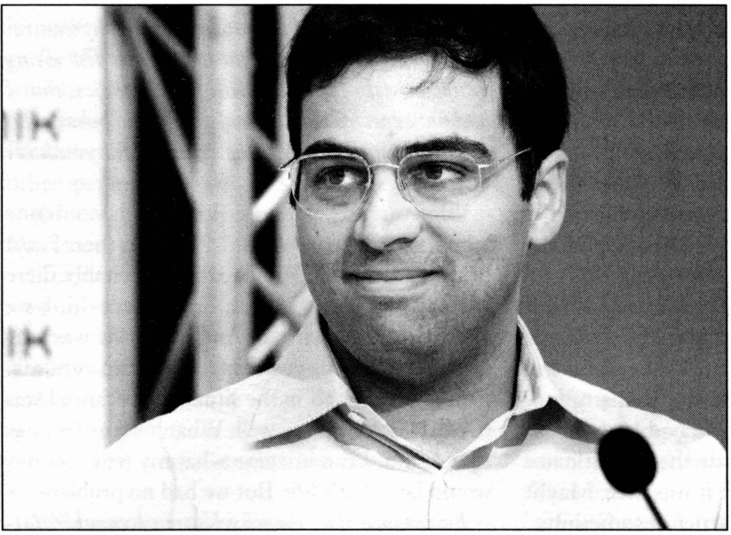
'(Laughs) No. The financial crisis is unbelievable, it's almost like 1929. But I feel fairly detached, I don't know why. I'm sure I've lost money as well, but I feel detached some way. Maybe it's just the match, which took a lot of energy and focus.'

– You came here with a team that was only partly predictable. On what basis did you select the various members?

'When people started asking about my team I said that Peter Heine would be there. That is no secret anymore and there is no point denying that, if it's possible to hide someone that tall. I spoke to Surya (Ganguly) in November. At that point the match wasn't clear, but I tentatively sounded him out.'

– He's been working for you from a distance before...

'*For* me is too strong, we've been working *with* each other. This is the first time we worked together, otherwise it was just informal stuff. He'd send me ideas by email and vice versa. This was the first time we had a formal arrangement. Radik (Radoslaw Wojtaszek) I con-



TORSTEN BEHL

Post-game press conferences are another invention of the New In Chess years.

tacted in the Bundesliga weekend after I played him. I suddenly thought, actually he is a very good idea. Mentally I had noted him down, but I didn't want to broach the topic during a Bundesliga event, so I asked him for his email address.'

– *What attracted you in him?*

'Simply preparing to play him twice in the Bundesliga I noticed what a strong and interesting player he was. I immediately thought, he'll be a good addition to the team. The last person to join the team was Rustam (Kasimdzhanov). In mid-April I spoke to Rustam and he agreed. And afterwards it turned out he lives a stone's throw away from here. I think having a former World Champion on the team adds quite some stuff. In April I worked in India with Surya, but also with Sasi (Krishnan Sasikiran – DJtG) and some Indian friends, and then in mid-June we came over here. The team worked brilliantly.'

– *And whose emphatic idea was it to play 1.d4?*

'This was mine, this was clear. In general seconds can't force you to do something like that! This decision I had already taken last year. I'd more or less thought, if the match comes about I will stick to 1.d4.'

– *I'm not going to bang my head into the Petroff...*

'It's not even that. I took the decision very early without even looking at the Petroff. So afterwards I could smile a lot at people who asked me how progress was against the Petroff. I had no idea, because I had decided to make the switch almost completely and just to stick to it. You can't change your mind halfway through and have second thoughts. I understood after I took the decision, after investing a month in it you can't suddenly say, no, I go back to 1.e4. That's madness. Then you stick with it through thick and thin, and you accept the consequences. I understood the gravity of that decision, but having taken it I didn't budge. You are literally burning the bridges behind you, kicking away the ladder, think of the analogy you want. Then the question came, should I play 1.d4 somewhere to train a little bit? But in the end I didn't bother.'

– *At some point I expected 1.e4 to come back. Did you consider it for Game 9 as well?*

'No. After my loss I suddenly thought it would be nice to play something you feel very well, and I decided to switch back to 1.e4 for the last game. But for Game 9 it didn't come up.'

– *And who came up with the bishop b7 concept in the Meran?*

'It's funny. I found bishop b7 myself, and when I spoke to Rustam later, it turned out that he had found it a good year in advance of me. Then we exchanged files and I must say his file was much larger, so I'd have to say it was his idea. I thought it was funny that two people had noticed that it was dangerous, him and me, and this sort of gave me extra confidence in the variation.'

– *Before the match there was a lot of talk about the typical match player and the typical tournament player. In hindsight we didn't see too much of that difference. Did you feel that it was blown out of proportion before the match or were you nervous in a way that Kramnik might be the more experienced match player?*

'No, I think match experience he definitely has more of. All I was saying, the point I was trying to make was that a match isn't a superior way of determining a champion than a tournament. But you cannot ignore the fact that a match has unique characteristics. Clearly someone can be stronger in a match than in a tournament, but I don't see any reason why this match is more legitimate than Mexico. That was merely my argument. But I also understood that to make the argument that Mexico has as much legitimacy as Bonn, I would have to win Bonn.'

– Was that annoying pressure or healthy pressure?

'It was probably healthy. Especially this lent-the-title jab probably motivated me quite a bit. (Kramnik's remark after the world championship in Mexico that he felt he had lent Anand the title till they would decide the real title in a match – DJtG) In that sense it was nice. Maybe it makes your senses a bit sharper or something.'

– It's often difficult to gauge your feelings, because you're outwardly so calm. At the press conferences it was always Kramnik who was making the jokes and acting self-confidently. Most of the time you were sitting there with this look of can-I-go-now?

'It's true, some days it seemed to me that no one really wanted to ask questions and they were just staring. But in general I was not that social. First of all it's a distraction. I was talking to Jeroen van den Berg this morning at breakfast and Yasser (Seirawan) said, I can see the match is over. Because I had not spoken to anyone even at breakfast for a while. I went in, had my breakfast, got up. Don't ask me if it's necessary or not, I just did it.'

– For the superficial observer it may have been confusing. Whereas Kramnik had this self-confident demeanour, you were mostly silent and at crucial moments in the games you were visibly very nervous. But the results showed that things were going well for you. How tense were you actually?

'I guess concentration and tension is a matter of definition really. I would say I was very concentrated, I was fully there. And I was tense as well. This time I had no problem concentrating, my mind hardly ever wandered. Briefly, when I went bishop g4 in Game 10, I thought, maybe I've equalized, and then briefly I started to think of that evening. Then he went queen a6 and it hit me that it wasn't going to be ready that evening. But I think that I should also try to avoid any serious lapse of concentration. Most days I was fully there.'

– World championship matches rarely improve relations between players, but in this case few if any problems were expected. Still I must confess that I had not expected that both of you would behave this impeccably all through the match. Did you have any worries there?

'Not terribly. I don't think he is someone who looks for trouble and I don't either. I sort of thought it would go like this. Inevitably there is some tension in the air, but I don't think we showed it to each other. And in fact he was surprisingly gracious yesterday. OK, I can very easily imagine myself in the situation, because I was there. He took it very well. What his true feelings are? Again, I can imagine what my true feelings would be. That's life. But we had no problems.'

– I was touched by the way Kramnik congratulated you, first shaking your hand, then putting another hand on top. What did he say?

'He was very very warm. He said congratulations and you played well.'

– A predictable reaction after a match, which was already heard from various experts, is that the loser didn't play his usual chess and that the winner was better prepared. To my mind the match was played on a high level and while Kramnik played well most of the time, you played extremely well. What is your assessment?

'I think that is more or less the case. If both sides play very well you normally don't get a decision, that's clear. So there's going to be some mistake at some stage or other. I guess there can be atrocious matches, but in general one would have to ask what these people are waiting for? That's not clear. Like I said the main thing is that the chess had content. We were using good ideas, things were happening. Did we execute them flawlessly? Probably not. But the match was very rich in content. In the second half he actually recovered and put quite a lot of pressure on me. In the first half we'd clearly outguessed him, with the bishop b7 in the Meran, me playing 1.d4, I was switching between lines. I don't know if every single one had the same impact, but I thought generally that the surprise value was very high. I was getting in the first novelty. But after Game 6 he managed to turn it around. Even when I played the Vienna he managed to exert some pressure, and in Game 10 he hit back with a very strong idea of himself. Which in effect showed that my strategy for the match was correct. Because Game 10 was the first time I fell into his web. And I fell only once. That's what matches are all about. It's basically about whether you can outfox the other guy and how you do so.'

– *And remain ready for the blow that will inevitably come one day...*

'Yes, he managed a big hit in Game 10, but it was not inconceivable that there would be two hits as well. In general one is acceptable. You should not assume that you can get away with no losses.'

– *In the first half the match took a dream course for you. How were these first wins received in your team?*

'Of course we were happy, but we were trying not to say the unspoken stuff that's hanging in the air. Everyone understood how dramatic the match situation was and everyone of us was pretending very hard that we were taking it from game to game. At least outwardly my team kept the discipline and I tried as well. But every draw gets you closer and after a while you don't play at the same level anymore.'

– *And then when you lost a game...*

'In general a three-point lead with three rounds to go is one of the things you should never complain about. But it's funny, you lose one game and you're only one game away from not having a real lead anymore. Winning three games on the trot sounds like a hard job, but if you break it up into the individual games, then it's possible. It's not a hopeless situation. Of course, it's hugely favourable for me and he can almost afford no mistakes anymore. I mean, yesterday's game, if something had gone wrong there, you'd have a whole rest day today to reflect on what you did... Next thing you know it's getting tough.'

– *How did you spend the day after that loss?*

'As usual the night before the rest day we didn't do any work, we all went to sleep. And then yesterday we started to work a bit. I had more or less decided that for the last game I would switch to 1.e4 and then the team worked on that. And then yesterday morning, when I woke up at nine, I thought, only six more hours and then the game starts. I can't take this waiting anymore.'

– *And now what? You've won all the conceivable world championships, won all major tournaments. Is it time for...? How do you look at the near future?*

'For the near future I plan to take a serious break and then life goes on, life starts again. I am sure once you go to a tournament, new challenges will turn up. There are lots of exciting events coming up and I will sit back and watch from home. I'll play Linares next and take it from there.'

– *One complicating factor may be that there is no clear cycle for the world championship, anything there is up in the air. Would you consider luring Kasparov back out of retirement?*

'Who knows? But for the moment don't ask me what I am going to do next.'

– *And so the final question... what was Magnus Carlsen's role?*

'Well, what can I say? He came after Bilbao, we worked a little bit, very nice of him to take the time out and that was helpful. And he also showed me what Hammer (Norwegian IM Jon Ludvig Hammer – DJtG) has been doing, one of his school friends. That was pretty essential. (Laughing) Don't forget to put that in.'

Hold the back page! I know I said that the previous article would end our journey through the past 25 years of New In Chess, but that is not quite true. For the last few years, the back page of each issue of New In Chess has been occupied by one of those standard questionnaires one sees in many magazines and newspapers. I see no reason why this book should be any different, and in keeping with the book's theme, we end with a compilation of the best and wittiest answers to have appeared in **Just Checking** *over the years.*

What is your favourite colour?
The hue of my beloved's cheek, when the morning sun glances off her sleeping face. No, wait, it's purple. [Mig Greengard]

What is your favourite food?
Mexican, because it's cheap and plentiful. Unhealthy, too. [Alex Yermolinsky]
Anything except English. [John Nunn]

What is your favourite drink?
Hot water. [Jonathan Rowson]

Who is your favourite writer?
Jan Timman. [Loek van Wely]
Impossible to name only a few. If I'm in zugzwang, then Shakespeare, Baudelaire and Ayn Rand. [Joel Lautier]

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Bless the Woman, obviously, because I play a role in it! [Alexandra Kosteniuk]
The Godfather. [Practically everybody else!]

Who is your favourite actor?
Vladimir Zhirinovsky (Extreme Russian nationalist politician – ed.). [Evgeny Bareev]

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
When I was a young player, I read *The Most Instructive Games of Chess Ever Played*, by Irving Chernev, which made chess seem ridiculously easy. Then I read *Alekhine's Best Games of Chess*, which made chess seem impossibly difficult. Eventually, I discovered that the truth lies somewhere between the two. [John Nunn]

What is the best chess game you ever played?
I'm proud of the art gallery that is my games database, but the collection can only be sold as a whole. Perhaps that's just a pretentious way of saying it's for someone else to choose. [Luke McShane]

What was your best result ever?
Palma de Mallorca 1989, 7-7 in blitz against Kramnik (already rated 2490), where I had 2 minutes against his 5. [Boris Gelfand]
1990, when I got to third base with Jeanette Neybert on our first date. [Mig Greengard]

What is it that you most appreciate in a person?
Honesty, followed by good opening ideas, results in Mr Perfect! [Peter Leko]

Who would you have liked to be if you hadn't been yourself?
A hard-hitting, leg-spinning all-rounder for England. Not much chance of that happening, though. [Peter Svidler]
A dictator somewhere. [Suat Atalik]

What is your greatest fear?
That I might get stuck with Alekhine's Defence for the rest of my life. [Alexander Baburin]
The abuse of psychiatric power, and going mad. In that order. [Jonathan Rowson]
Strangely enough, the same as Victor Bologan's – to be attacked by a big fish in the open sea. Incidentally, Krunoslav Hulak once told me that this is also *his* biggest fear! [Ivan Sokolov]

Do you have a dream?
To die contentedly at a ripe old age, in the arms of a beautiful nymph. [Nigel Short]

To spend a night in a camp in the Serengeti. [Vishy Anand]

Do you believe in the future of chess?
Well... to begin with let me say that I do not really believe in a future for mankind... [Vladimir Kramnik]
When chess players start to have microchips surgically implanted into their brains, it might be time to quit. [Larry Christiansen]

Has chess made you happy?
Yes, and it still does, since happiness is a journey, not a destination. [Joel Lautier]
Yes, but I've learned to keep my resume up to date. [Mig Greengard]

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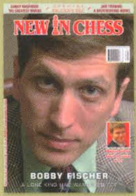

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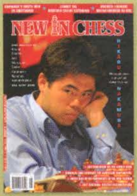

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